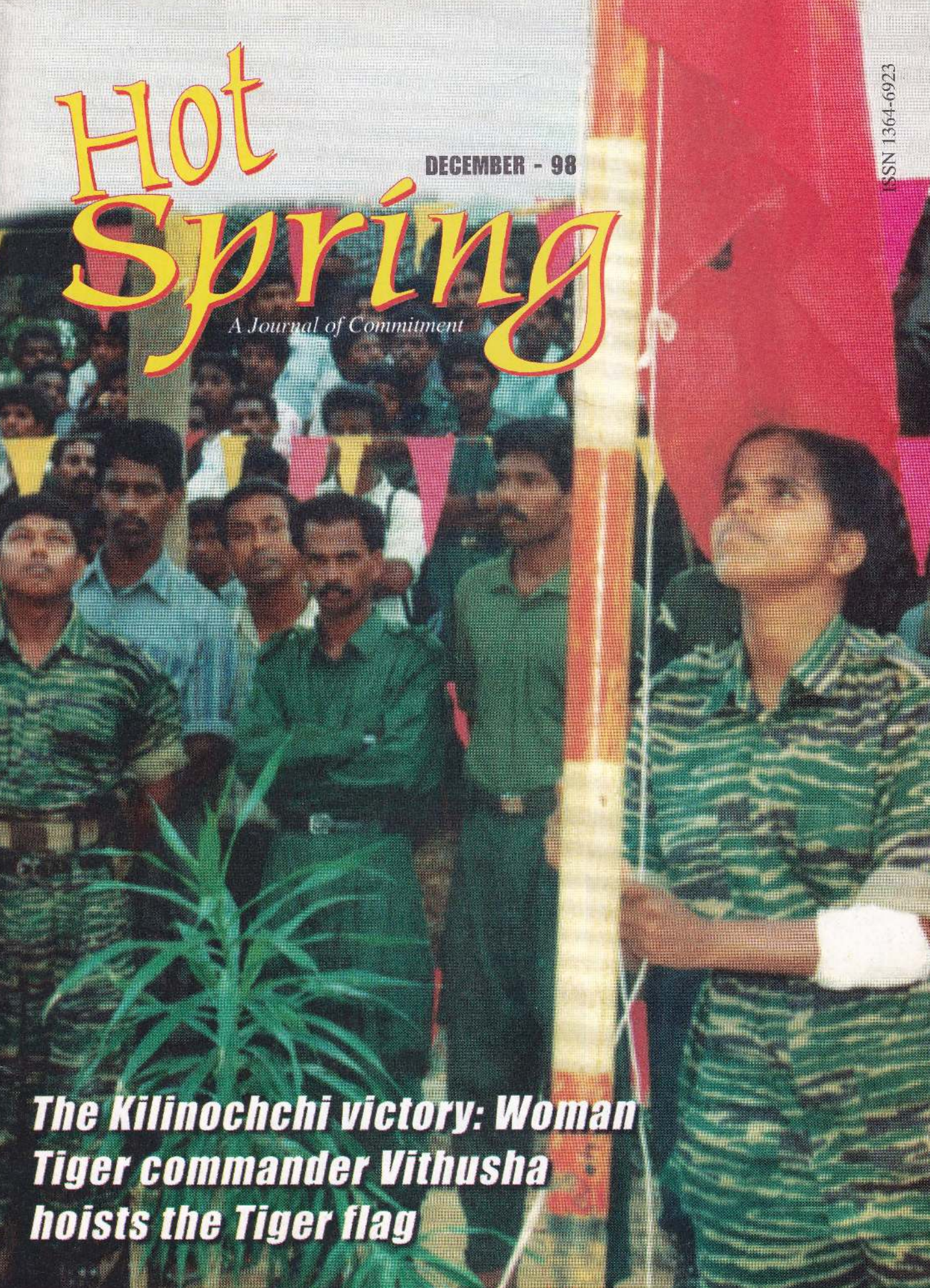
Hot Spring

A Journal of Commitment

DECEMBER - 98

ISSN 1364-6923



The Kilinochchi victory: Woman Tiger commander Vithusha hoists the Tiger flag

A CALL TO EMPATHIZE WITH THE SUFFERING HUMANS IN THE VANNI TAMIL HOMELAND!

Jegath Gaspar Raj

Vanni refugees

Among the millions of Tamils all over the world who regularly tune in to the Tamil Service of RADIO VERITAS ASIA in the Philippines are also those Eelam Tamils living in despair in the Vanni Tamil homeland. Radio Veritas Asia has been giving those suffering Tamils renewed hope and a belief in the future even as they languish in the jungles, deprived of sufficient food, proper shelter, and hardly any medical care even to look after their malnourished children.

Radio Veritas Asia has quoted what a former medical student Susilathevi living in the Akkarayan area of the Vanni district wrote to them. This is what she says (in Tamil):

"Death comes to all people. But we Tamils who live in the Vanni are living with Death. Ours is an eternal search for Life within Death".

Does this not touch the hearts of those fellow Tamils living in comparative comfort and living in luxury? Spare a thought for these unfortunate fellow humans, says Rev.Jegath Gaspar Raj of Radio Veritas Asia, in a stirring appeal to all Tamils worldwide. His appeal is being supported by the Inter Faith Support Group based in London in the U.K.

Says Rev.Gaspar Raj:- There is a question mark hanging over their very future existence as a people. If this uncertainty continues any more, they will become a doomed people. But prayer helps. We pray that their lives be spared, that they live to emerge into a peaceful life as free citizens. Join us in thinking of them, praying for them.

Malnourished Tamil child in the Vanni, victim of Sri Lankan government food embargo

Let us fast one day in the week and pray to God Almighty that their lives be spared. Let us get together on the third Friday of every month,our family members, our neighbours, our friends, of every religious persuasion, skip one meal, and pray together for those people. The money that is saved by skipping one meal, however small it be, is untainted money, money that represents the spirit of self-sacrifice. Let us give that money to the TRO, so that it could ease the pain of hunger of our kith and kin in the Vanni.

Let us organise inter-faith groups wherever we live, and get together in the name of our common humanity.

Plese link up with:

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Vol: 3 N°: 9 December 1998

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Published by

Melrose Publications Ltd.
U.K.

Price: £1.50

Annual subscription
(for 12 issues):

UK	*£18*
Europe	*£20*
Outside Europe	*£22*

Mode of Payment:
1. Bankers Draft
2. International Money Order
3. Cheque drawn on a UK Bank current account.

(all inclusive of postage)

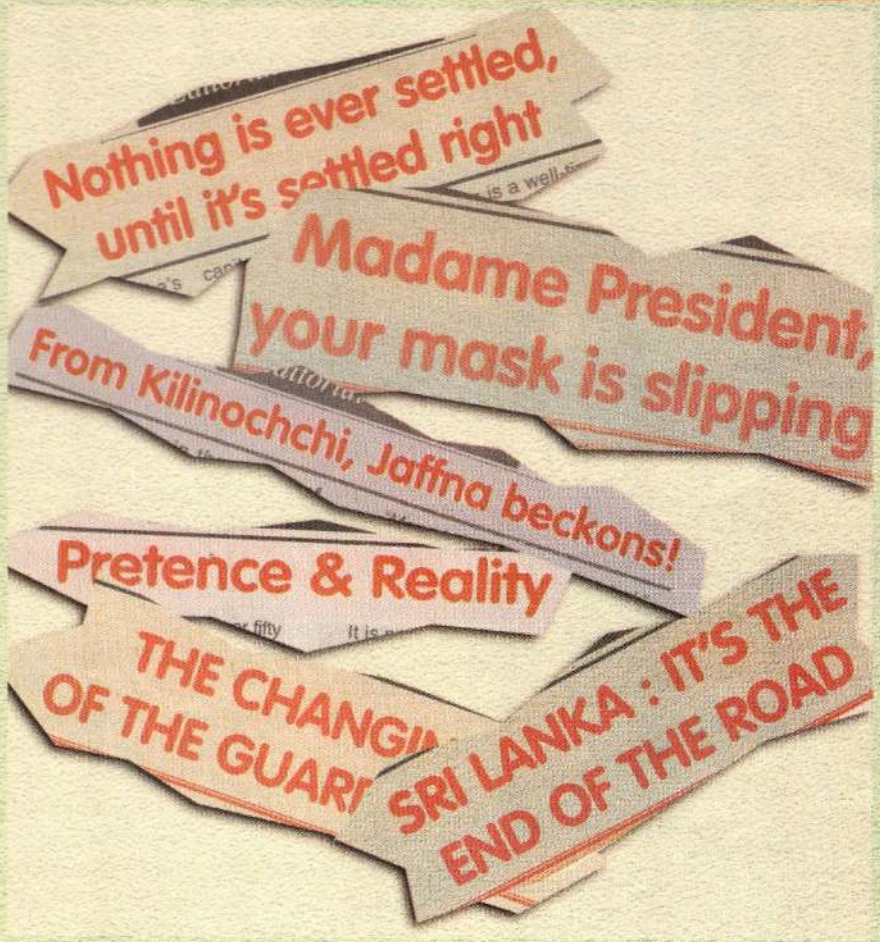
No personal cheques of foreign Banks (non UK) are entertained.
(This applies to all new Subscriptions and Renewals)

Cheques to be drawn in favour of Melrose Publications Ltd.

The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the publishers

Editorial Comment

TAMI EELAM: HAS THE COUNT-DOWN BEGUN?



Hot Spring wishes all its Subscribers, readers, patrons, well-wishers, admirers . . . .

the warmest Season's Greetings and a happy, peaceful 1999, free from Sri Lankan State Terrorism!

What They Say

"Today, Kumaratunga, the one-time angel of peace is virtually a goddess of war".

- Roving Correspondent in SUNDAY LEADER, November 22, 1998.

* * * * *

"More recently. Mr.Mandela met President Kumaratunga, but rather flippantly treated her like his daughter. or Mrs.Bandaranaike's daughter, rather than as a head of state...".

- Editorial lament in SUNDAY TIMES, Colombo, November 15.

* * * * *

"The military strategy of the PA government is to withold all food and medicine to the starving and sick children, pregnant mothers, the old and infirm both in cleared and uncleared areas on the pretext that it will be taken by the LTTE. The government thinks that the food and mredicine embargo will weaken the LTTE. They are sadly mistaken. It has not. On the contrary. it is killing the Tamil population slowly".

- Sri Lanka's Opposition leader Ranil Wickremasinghe, interviewed by WEEKEND EXPRESS Nov.28-29, '98

* * * * *

"Let us stop calling him General Ratwatte. Let us not be party to his game....No more will he be general to me. From now on, I shall call him, simply, "Mister Anuruddha Leuke Bandara Ratwatte. For that is who he is".

- Marwaan Macan-Markar, writing in the SUNDAY LEADER, Nov.22, under the headline "The fancy dresser's march to fame".

* * * * *

"It is wrong to say that you could destroy the Tigers and then feel that the problem is going to be over. It will worsen—the situation and the problem is not going to be over. ...There are many millions of Tamil people living in the world.... It is a liberation struggle. It is not an ordinary problem..."

- Rt.Rev.Dr.Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar, interviewed by Wilson Gnanadasa for the SUNDAY LEADER, Dea.6,1998

* * * * *

"If the LTTE is in possession of an aircraft, why don't Velupillai Prabhakaran send his mother in it to Colombo".

- Raving by Deputy "Defence" Minister Ratwatte to the State media, quoted in SUNDAY LEADER, Dec.6, '98.

* * * * *

"Let us not forget that one of the first things done by the new South African government was to suspend all arms sales to Sri Lanka. That ban has not been lifted to date. Another act was to remove all legislation pertaining to terrorism. There is no law pertaining to terrorism now. Thus the LTTE or any organisation for that matter cannot be termed terrorist in South African law".

- Searchlight column in SUNDAY LEADER by Roving Correspondent, Dec. 6

* * * * *

"Democracy is not simply having elections. Stalin held elections. Even Hitler held elections. Democracy is a process of allowing all views to be heard. of allowing the competition of ideas".

- US ambassador to Malaysia, John Malott, defending US Vice President Gore's statement supporting an anti-government movement in Malaysia.

* * * * *

International

"I notice that plenty of marriages don't last very long. When I'm invited to a wedding, I ask when the divorce is going to be".

- Alarmed by the high divorce rate in Cuba, President Fidel Castro jokes with journalists.

* * * * *

"We just cannot find any suitable actors who are on the porky side. All the applicants seem to live on salads and look after their bodies".

- Julian Pearson, Director of a British entertainment agency, on the scarcity of portly old men to play Santa Claus this Christmas.

* * * * *

"Mrs.That cher was adorable with Denis, her husband, but she started flirting with Ronald Reagan - there was a little electricity there"

- Lucky Roosevelt, Reagan's chief of protocol, as quoted in a new book by London socialite Mona Bauwens.

* * * * *

"The House of Lords ruling (denying General Pinochet immunity on the plea of being head of state) is the most important case in human rights law this century. The significance of this case will extend to all repressive regimes where the heads of state seek to assert the freedom to travel around the world living in luxury on the proceeds of their crimes".

- A lawyer representing Amnesty International, and the families of the victims of the Pinochet regime, Geoffrey Bindmann, at a Press conference in the British Parliament.

* * * * *

UNDP - An Unjust Aggressor!

An Open Letter to UNDP (Sri Lanka) from Prof. A. J. V. Chandrakanthan

Ms. Lisa Hiller UNDP - Sri Lanka

Dear Ms. Hiller,

The sum and substance of the Report that was published by you recently on the Economic prospects for Sri Lanka as portrayed in the Sinhala national Press and in the electronic media is ostensibly aimed at demonising and destroying the Tamil Nation's cry for freedom and dignity; both overtly and covertly under the deceptive guise of development. Your report is seemingly aimed at crushing the Tamil nationalist spirit and in that it surges to rejuvenate the Sinhala State machine that it may continue its oppressive agenda against the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil nation.

In plain and simple words UNDP's report not only casts unfounded aspersions on the legitimate Tamil struggle for freedom and self-determination but in its content and character it is an indirect and blatantly unjust aggression on a nation and a people whose life and dignity have been trampled upon by such shamelessly provocative and pro-government lobby.

As a powerful organisation, the UNDP under the pretext of promoting "development" has become a stooge in the hands of a militray junta that camouflages itself as a democratically elected government. Needless to say that many western nations within the walls of their foreign offfices laugh at the manner in which democracy is understood or practised in Sinhala Sri Lanka. But quite unashamedly they continue to pour their economic aid to the war coffers of Sri Lanka. Even at this eleventh hour of the national disaster, it may be good for an organization like UNDP that purports to be neutral in the face of untold human tragedy of genocidal proportions perpetrated by a State on a section of its population, to ask what has the UNDP done in terms of development in the North and East for the past ten years? Has not the UNDP continued to aid and abet the Sinhala government by endorsing tacitly all its genocidal policies.

I shall spell out at least ten of the major accusations that would render President Chandrika not only culpable in the International courts of Justice but would put to shame the charges levied against the Chilean dictator Pinochet whose crimes against humanity are now discussed in the open. The invasion and the subsequent destruction of the Tamil homelands is done today in the name of development, under the facade of fighting "terrorism" and safe-guarding democracy; a easy euphemism for Sri Lanka's State-terrorism.

Prof. A. J. V. Chandrakanthan

Concordia University Montreal, CANADA.

The late Bishop Ambalavanar

I remember the visit of a UNDP envoy to Jaffna sometime in August or September 1995. He wanted to meet some members of the faculty at the University of Jaffna. As President of the Jaffna University Teachers" Association, I chaired the meeting at which some religious dignitaries including the great and audacious Bishop Amabalavanar were also present. The UNDP envoy repeatedly told us or warned us in advance of the impending assault on the city of Jaffna. He spoke in glowing terms about the matchless fire-power of the Sri Lankan army. This envoy in fact came to us as a messenger of death. He was the last foreign national to visit Jaffna before the invasion of Jaffna by the Sinhala army. He seemed to have had a blue-print of "operation Reviresa" for he really spoke with conviction as to how the city of Jaffna will be destroyed by the Sinhala army. I remember exactly this is what he said. "Some Sinhala army generals have decided to capture Jaffna because they want their names to be written in history as the Victors". Bishop Ambalavanar said, "if that is what they wish let them do it. But it will be short-lived victory. Tamils will never allow themselves to be subjugated and fettered."

If you check your records you should be able to get the name of this envoy. Ask him about the responses he got from the intellectuals and religious leaders in Jaffna to the message of death that he brought. Did we not tell him that in no time in the history of the Northern Province had there been such development, free of corruption and pilfering, under the magnificient administration of the LTTE. The UNDP envoy is a personal witness to this. The reforestration programme initiated and sponsored by the LTTE, the small industries and revolving loan system introducd and managed by the LTTE besides the massive agricultural revolution spearheaded by them were a few of the major projects that helped the poorest of the poor. No

wonder that all retired civil service personnel, experts in Agriculture, Animal husbandry, post-masters and professors and all experienced professionals freely made their time and assistance available to the planning and development branch of the LTTE. This fact can be cross-checked with any one in Jaffna.

The establsihment of such excellent organizations as TRO and TEEDOR or The Economic Consultacy House by the people of the Northern Province are but a few successful and glittering examples of development by and for the people. Initiatives that were born from the grass-roots. **Eelam Tamils have never required and will never require experts from UNDP to tell them how to develop their homeland economy.** Perhaps it is under your advice that President Chandrika formed a Rehabilitation Committee for North with a Sinhala Chair-person and one or two Tamil quislings who have no idea of the terrain of the north. We neither want you nor the Sinhalese to determine our development priorities. But you will do a great deal if you can use your good offices to prevent the army from destroying the little development that was done by the Tamil people with the co-operation of the LTTE in the past ten years.

The severest economic embargo was thrusted down the throats of the Tamil people in the North between 1990 to 1995 and in spite of this not one single death occured due to starvation. **UNDP had nothing to say when for over a decade paddy fields belonging to the Tamils were set on fire by the Sinhala army.** UNDP responded with a mute silence when the government's department of Agriculture refused to send certified paddy seeds to the North or even placed a rigourous ban on seed potatoes, vegetable seeds or seedlings, banned all types of fertilisers and kerosene (required by farmers to pump water from underground wells). UNDP turned a blind eye when the successive governments imposed ban on fishing, the only source of protein for the Tamil children. **UNDP never raised its voice when successive Sinhala governments declared, one day chickens, live-stock, mother-stock, vegetable oil, butter and margarine, chocolates and sweets, biscuits and even chicken-feed (mash) as weapons of war.** These were banned for over seven years. In light of this agonising past, you should be ashamed of a report produced in the name of UNDP as a political ploy to enhance the image of the demonic state of Sri Lanka and to smear mud on the LTTE that is paying daily with their youthful life to reinstate the value of freedom and dignity, self-determination and self-rule for an oppressed nation.

General Pinochet: Charges against President Chandrika will put to shame those against him

As a paid employee yourself and those racially-biased Sinhala intellectuals who were commissioned to produce this so called report quite legitimately have your/their own agenda. After all it is numerocracy that is always used interchangeably as democracy in Sri Lanka. It is not surprising that you too have worked under this frame of Sinhala democracy. In the common vocabulary of POLITICAL ETHICS, an unjust aggression is defined as an unlawful and oppressive act of support directly or tacitly given to an individual or to a totalitarian regime that remains in or retain power by unjustly suppressing a part or a whole of a national population. That the governmnet of Sri Lanka, particularly under President Chandrika Bandaranaike is a perfect illustration of a regime that uses militray repression as a weapon of political subjugation of the Tamil nation is a case that can be well argued in any international courts with substantial evidence.

I wish to out-line the following ten facts which in any liberal democracy will serve also as an indictment against a State that uses military power to achieve political ends. If you can refute any one of them with acceptable evidence, I shall be too pleased to correct my stand:

1. It is under the regime of President Chandrika that the largest number of disappearances have ever been reported from among the Tamil population in the North and East of Sri Lanka. The world-renowned Human Rights Organization, Amnesty International has recorded that in April-May 1996 alone, there were 676 cases of disappearances of Tamil children, women and men. Is this an integral part of your understanding of democratic development? Why not start your development program right in the heart of Chemmani that is soiled in Tamil blood.

2. It was under Chandrika's Presidency that the largest number of children were mutilated, maimed or blown to bits by bombs and shells unleashed by the Sri Lankan army (I am a personal witness to the brutal bombing of Navali on July 09, 1995 and Nagercoil Primary School in Jaffna on the 20th of August 1995 which killed over 40 children between the age of 6 and 10.) The Jaffna sub-delegation of the International Commmittee of the Red Cross (Geneva) will have the names and addresses of these children in their confidential files. Ask your government to obtain these for you. Does the UNDP consider children as worthy of any development? Or does it condone these killings as part of Sri Lanka's national development?

3. The most dramatic increase in the number of amputees among the Sinhalese and Tamils is taking place

Continued on page 16

LTTE Leader Prabhakaran's Martyrs' Day Speech 1998

The following are extracts from Mr. Pirapaharan's Heroes' Day message:

● "While the whole world has radically transformed and moving on the path of peace, progress and harmony and preparing itself to embrace the new millennium, Sri Lanka is still caught up in a turbulent conflict. The Tamil national question continues to torment the island as a burning issue fueled by war and violence. Why is it that the Tamil ethnic conflict, with a prolonged history of more than half-a-century, continues to be an insurmountable problem while the world is undergoing change, resolving tensions and conflicts? The Tamil people are demanding none other than their inalienable rights. Therefore, political justice is on their side. What are we demanding? What are we struggling for?

● We aspire to live peace fully with freedom and dignity, without the interference of anyone, in our own soil; in our Motherland where we are born and bred; in our own historical homeland which belongs to us. We too, are human beings. We constitute ourselves as a human society possessing the basic rights of human beings. We are a national formation with a distinct language, culture and history. We, therefore, demand that we should be recognized as a community of people, as a social formation with distinct characteristics. We have the right to determine our political status. On the basis of the right, we aspire to choose freely a political model suited to us to govern ourselves.

● This is what our people are demanding and fighting for. The Sinhala nation has been denying this just and civilized demand. It is precisely for this reason that the Sinhala state has been oppressing and suppressing our people. Successive Sri LankaGovernments have neither integrated or assimilated our people within the unitary system nor allowed our people the right to secede. Instead, they have always attempted to repress and subjugate our people. It is for this reason we have been compelled to fight a political struggle for the last fifty years.

● Though the forms of our struggle have changed in accordance with the historical compulsions, we continue to fight for political rights, for our right to live in freedom. Now the Tamil struggle has expanded and escalated into a war between two nations. It is none other than the anti-Tamil attitude of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism that has turned Sri Lanka into a blazing cauldron of violence. The Tamil national question arose as historical product of this racist oppression.

"The Sinhala nation lacks the ability to comprehend objectively the very basis,as well as the rationale behind the Tamil issue, and to deal with the problem humanly"

● The world has changed with the passage of time. Similarly the politics of the world also has changed. But the politics of the Sinhala nation has not changed. It is unfortunate that the Sinhala politicians have not realized this fact. Fantasies that arose from ancient mythology have grown and developed into hegemonic ideas which exert tremendous impact on the Sinhala political and intellectual world.

● As a consequence the Sinhala nation lacks the ability to comprehend objectively the very basis as well as the rationale behind the Tamil issue and to deal with the problem humanly. Over the years our people have been shedding tears of blood under the oppressive grip of Sinhala chauvinism. We are deeply saddened by the fact that their long standing suffering has not yet touch the conscience of the world community. Apart from this apathetic attitude shown by the international community towards the problems of our people, the massive financial and military assistance provided to Sri Lanka by foreign countries has also exacerbated their tragic plight. The assistance provided by foreign countries has also encouraged the rigid, irreconcilable and bellicose attitude of

the Sinhala chauvinists.

● The world community has always fought for the cause of the oppressed and it has always raised its voice of protest or intervened whenever there have been incidents of human rights violations, crimes against humanity or repression of minority nations in any part of the world. But we are dismayed to note that the international community is observing a muted silence over the colossal tragedy faced by the Eelam Tamils. Encouraged by the economic aid, military assistance, political, moral and diplomatic backing gained from international countries, Sinhala chauvinists have been adopting a genocidal policy against the Tamils with single-minded ruthlessness and arrogance.

● We are aware of the fact that the international community is misguided by the sophisticated misinformation campaign carried out by Sri Lanka. It is unfortunate that the world community has uncritically assimilated the preposterous theories advanced by the Sri Lankan state (i.e. war for peace) to legitimize its military campaign against the Tamils.

● Nevertheless, facts about the plight of the Tamils have also found their way to the international arena. Atrocities and injustices committed against the Tamil people for the last several decades have been well documented and submitted to international forums. International human rights organisations have expressed serious concern that the state oppression against the Tamil has reached genocidal proportions. It is well known internationally that more than sixty thousand innocent Tamil civilians have been brutally done to death over the years by the terror and violence unleashed by the racist state in the Tamil homeland. Further more, more than eight hundred thousand Tamils, who fled the country and sought refuge all over the world, bear testimony as living witness to the barbaric nature of the Sinhala state oppression. The world is aware of all these facts. Yet, we are surprised and deeply saddened to note that this monumental human tragedy has not yet aroused the concern of world community.

● We are well aware that in the present world order every country pursues its own national and commercial interests. Yet, the civilized world has always given primacy to the universal values of human rights and freedoms. What dismays us is that the countries which lead the civilized world are reluctant to raise their voices against the uncivilized forms of oppression unleashed against the Tamils. Nevertheless, we have not lost hope. One day the truths that are buried deeply in the mass graves of Tamil Eelam will emerge from slumber and reveal the true face of Sinhala chauvinism. Only then the tragic story of our people will touch the heart of the world. Until such time, Eelam Tamils living all over the world should continue their campaign relentlessly about the tragic existential conditions of our people in the Tamil homeland with the objective of arousing the conscience of humanity.

● So far, not a single voice of rationality is heard from the Sinhala national against the war. None so far has made a plea to put an end to the war and resolve the problem by peaceful means. From politicians to the monks, from intellectuals to the journalists, every one calls for the intensifications

"Since the Sinhala leadership lacks the political will and sincerity to resolve the problem, we favour third party mediation for political negotiations..."

of the war. The Sinhala nation wants to continue the war to subjugate the Tamil nation.

● Sri Lanka is a Buddhist country, a nation that follows the teachings of the Compassionate One who preached the noble ideals of love, truth and enlightenment. We are surprised as to how the evil of racism and militarism has raised its ugly head in a Buddhist society that thrived on the philosophy of "dharma".

● Today the war has expanded and escalated into a full-fledged conflagration in which armed forces of the two nations are confronting each other. The Sinhala nation is engaged in war of aggression to occupy Tamils land and to subjugate the Tamil people. We are fighting to protect our people and liberate our soil from alien aggression. The Sinhala nation is engaged in a war of injustice where as we are engaged in a liberation struggle in which justice is on our side.

● Chandrika's government, which has reached the peak in oppressing the Tamils is determined to escalate and continue the war. Her government is bent on prosecuting the war through the military campaign have demoralized the army, brought massive destruction of life and property and shattered the economy of the country.

● Chandrika's military project has crumbled and failed to achieve any of its strategic objectives. The fundamental objective of the war is to defeat and destroy the Liberation Tigers. But the LTTE has not been defeated but rather has grown immensely in strength acquiring wider experience in the art of modern warfare and turned out to be an invincible force. The Vanni battles caused a serious of debacles and massive casualties to the Sinhala armed forces. The 'Jayasikuru' battle, which was undertaken with the grand design to open the road to Jaffna, has prolonged for more than a year and half and reached an impasse with the fall of Killinochchi.

● Chandrika's political project of establishing Sinhala state administration in the occupied Jaffna peninsula with the help of the Tamil quislings is also being shattered . We cannot allow the Sinhala aggressive army to occupy even an inch of our homeland nor will we permit Sinhala state administrative functions in the occupied Tamil lands. We are shedding blood and fighting a deadly struggle with the primary objective of liberating our motherland which is the very foundation of the national existence and economic life of our people. Therefore we cannot permit the foot print of the Sinhala aggressors to remain embedded on our sacred soil.

● We do not believe that Chandrika, who has become the author of the most blood strained chapter in the history of oppression of the Tamils, will bring peace to the country by resolving the Tamil national issue by peaceful means. She is a firm believer in a military solution and lives in an illusion that political conflicts can be solved by military means. She is also a prisoner of the Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinistic ideology. One cannot therefore expect a leadership dominated by such thinking to be humane and compassionate enough to do justice to the Tamils.

● We have not close the doors for peace. We are open to the civilized method of resolving conflicts through rational dialogue. Since the Sinhala leadership lacks the political will and sincerity to resolve the problem we favour third party mediation for political negotiations. But we are not prepared to accept any pre-conditions for political dialogue. We want the political negotiations to be held in an atmosphere of peace and normalcy, free from the conditions of war, military aggression and economic blockades. We are not stipulating any pre-conditions for peace talks. We are suggesting the creation of a climate of peace and goodwill to hold peace talks, a congenial environment in which our people must be free from the heavy burden of suffering imposed on them.

● We hold the view that political negotiations cannot be free, fair and just if the Government uses the military aggression on our soil and the restrictions imposed on the economic life of our people as political pressures. We are prepared to engage in initial talks to discuss the removal of such pressures and to workout a basic frame work for political negotiations.

● Our people are facing unbearable suffering in the form of death, destruction, displacement, hunger and starvation. They live as prisoners in their own homeland, facing daily, various forms of military atrocities.

● Our people want their day-to-day urgent problems resolved immediately. They cannot wait over an indefinite time until the peace talks resume and the ethnic conflict is discussed, resolved and the solution implemented. They want the war to come to an end and the occupation army that torments them to withdraw and their urgent existential problems addressed immediately. Is Chandrika's Government prepared to take a bold step to deal with the immediate essential problems of our people and resume political negotiations in a congenial climate of peace and goodwill? If not, the possibility for peace and a peaceful negotiated political settlement to the ethnic conflict will become remote.

● We do not anticipate that the hawkish and racist attitude of Sinhala chauvinism will undergo fundamental transformation. If such change does not take place Sinhala chauvinism will bear the responsibility for creating the concrete historical conditions for the birth of independent Tamil state".

Ratwatte's second brush with Death: Maj.General wounded

By Rahul Sharma

NEDUNKERNI, Sri Lanka, Dec 7 (Reuters) - Sri Lanka's ethnic war often seems a distant nightmare in bustling Colombo, but only a short helicopter ride away its reality is measured out daily in mortar shells and shattered lives.

Local and foreign journalists had a closer look at the fighting on Sunday when they were flown some 250 km (155 miles) north of the capital to Wanni region, main theatre of the 15-year-old death struggle between the government and Tamil rebels demanding their own homeland.

Heavy artillery shells fired by the Sri Lankan military whistled overhead on a cloudy afternoon as the party travelled in armoured personnel carriers from the town of Nedunkerni to Oddusuddan.

The army last Friday linked those two towns with Mankulam in a fresh offensive against Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels, claiming the territory for the first time in some 12 years.

But it was not long before the showcase tour turned sour. Only hours after briefing the journalists, Sri Lanka's Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte and three armed service chiefs narrowly escaped death in a heavy rebel mortar attack at Oddusuddan, 14 km (nine miles) north of Nedunkerni and 20 km (12 miles) east of Mankulam.

Ratwatte and other officials escaped unhurt in the attack, but five soldiers were killed and another 41, including a major general(Neil Dias), were wounded.

The journalists were turned back just short of the area where the attack occurred and asked to return to Nedunkerni.

"It was a narrow escape," a senior military official accompanying Ratwatte told Reuters at Nedunkerni.

Ambulances and army trucks rushed the dead and wounded to Nedunkerni and air force helicopters evacuated them to hospitals elsewhere as other soldiers stood by silently looking at their fallen colleagues.

"Mortars are deadly. The hit depends on the concentration of people," said an army officer in Nedunkerni.

"This time it took just two mortars to do the job."

Some six mortars fell near Ratwatte's convoy while the minister was talking to the troops after visiting a local temple and meeting civilians.

"The LTTE could have been informed by somebody in Oddusuddan itself. It seems the rebels had actually fired mortars at the same area the day before," said another military official who declined to be identified.

The tour for journalists came two days after Sri Lanka had officially closed one of the bloodiest chapters in the war. The defence ministry said on Friday that Operation Jayasikuru (Sure of Victory), launched last May to open a land route to the former rebel stronghold of the northern Jaffna peninsula, had been completed.

Thousands of soldiers and rebels died during the campaign. Military officials said the decision to link up the three northern towns under operation Rivi Bala was probably a shift in the military strategy of the government, which could now be trying to inch closer to the LTTE base at the northeastern coastal town of Mullaitivu.

The LTTE, who have been fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east since 1983, are just outside Oddusuddan, 24 km (15 miles) from Mullaitivu.

For the army's top brass Sunday's mortar attack was not the first close shave and for Ratwatte it was second time lucky.

Exactly two years ago he had a brush with death when his helicopter landed in a rebel-held area after develping a mechanical fault. The minister walked five kilometres (three miles) to safety..

Operation Jayasikurai "ended" but not "abandoned"

The Sri Lankan army has refuted the charge that it abandoned ``operation Jayasikurui,'' the most ambitious military offensive against the LTTE, without being able to achieve its aim of opening a land route between Jaffna and the rest of the island.

High-ranking military officials said calling off the operation did not mean that armed forces had dropped plans to restore the main supply route (MSR). The operation was launched in May 1997 "to weaken terrorist power in the Wanni area" and the new operation announced on Friday was aimed at securing more enemy controlled areas in Wanni, they said.

In a surprise move, the government on Friday said `operation Jayasikuri' (victory assured) had ended.

A press release from the ministry of defence which announced the launch of `Operation Rivi Bala' said it was a fresh operation conducted by the security forces after the completion of Jayasikuri.

Operation Jayaskurui, launched on May 13, managed to wrest only a meagre two thirds of the highway after18 months of operation against the touted 74 km recapture plans.

Interestingly, operation Rivi Bala was launched by the forces just three days after LTTE leader Prabahakaran's address over the Voice of Tiger offering peace talks through third party mediation.

Oh! Kadrigama(r)! oh you cat's paw, Dravidian kad!

The Tamil community of the island of Ilankai, in the midst of years of tribulation, has good reasons to be proud of having produced a man of the stature of the Prometheon Prabhakaran, the genius of a man who put fire in their bellies and inspired the band of intrepid warriors - the Liberation Tigers !

Their bravery and accomplishments are so magnificent that what we in our youth used to laugh off as poetic hyperbole about Tamilian exploits can truly be believed - at least about our present day heroes. The Tiger phenomenon is so unprecedented in the recent history of the Tamils that one could not be faulted for thinking that these men and women are of a different superior breed.

The stature of the Tamils once known for their civilization had so declined steeply in past years that they became in the eyes of many as coolies and pariahs, - the two words of common currency in English. One might wonder whether the word "traitor" was also derived from the word "throhi", the word commonly used by Tamils to mean traitor.

When the late G.G.Ponnambalam Q.C., travelled to London in the forties to present the case for constitutional safeguards for the Tamils (he foresaw what was coming) his Tamil political associates in Ceylon defected and joined the "enemy". Understandably, Ponnambalam considered them traitors. In one of his speeches that I was personally privileged to listen to, he speculated on the possibility that Ehelepola who betrayed the last king of Kandy was perhaps a Tamil too, trying to drive the point that traitors are not new to the Tamil community.

Every Tamil of the island knows by now to associate the Bandaranaike family (those among them who were in power) with discrimination, destruction, torture and disappearance and genocide. Not many knew that SWRD was

Kadrigamar

also beneath his Oxford veneer, steeped in "Aryan" fantasies. Ponnambalam and Bandaranaike, both Oxbridge educated, were, it should be noted, great political rivals. Bandaranaike, once unable to counter

S.K.Rathinam
U.S.A

Ponnambalam in a political argument,descended to what naturally came to him - racism - and ejaculated **"You Dravidian cad" at Ponnambalam, the implication being that he was an "Aryan noble".** (If Hitler had lived long enough to know that Bandaranaike had considered himself an Aryan, he would probably have chopped up Bandaranaike and incinerated him for his imposture!) **What that incident shows clearly is that the Sinhalese , even those with pretensions to European genteel culture, could at heart be racists. By the very fact they entertain the Aryan fantasy, they have condemned themselves to be racists.**

A hatchetman

"Dravidian Cad" has a new twist these days. By a great irony, that same "Aryan's" daughter has found a hatchetman, tool, cat's paw and Foreign Minister who is a Dravidian Kad ! Many Tamils consider this man to be the most dangerous and despicable Tamil ALIVE. He has gone round the world spreading caluminous lies about the Tamil Freedom fighters and making public statements which are in themselves violent, offensive and virulent.

The following is an excerpt from one of his pronouncements about the freedom fighters:".... a ruthless fanatical force small in number, high in ambition, undemocratic, and fascist in nature ".

Kad (short form for Kadirgamar) must have researched assidulously some thesaurus of offensive words to compose this statement ! What is interesting is that these words, with a little rearrangement, are appropriate more to the Sinhala army than to the Tamil freedom fighters and Kad is well aware of it. He is a member of the "inner" kitchen cabinet of the Bandaranaike Kumaratunga administration and that in itself is reason enough to believe he is involved more than peripherally, before the fact, in all the atrocities committed against the Tamils by the administration of which he is also more than a willing instrument.

The extent to which he went to criticise the reports of human rights orhanisations is a very clear indication of his guilt. The manner in which he selects events and distorts facts about the conflict is going beyond reasonable support for his masters. He never mentions the nearly one thousand Tamils who disappeared in the custody of his government's army nor the 60,000 Tamils killed by the government nor the half a million Tamils made refugees, nor the over 1000 Hindu temples and Christian churches bombed and shelled by his master's armed forces. He was so moved about the damage to one Buddhist temple that he (a Christian) went round the world shouting profanities against the Tamil fighters.

His government hounded the

Tamils out of their homes, their livelihood and out of existence ! Now he has personally declared WAR on those Tamils who escaped with their lives and eke out an existence overseas under less dignified circumstances. Having almost single-handedly got the U.S.State Department to declare the brave freedom fighters "terrorists" he has now turned his full wrath on the overseas Tamils. His mission, it is obvious from his actions, is to destroy the Tamils' quest for freedom and fairness

The three prongs of his attacks so far on the Tamil community are:-

1. Drive the Tamils out of their homeland, destroy their institutions, infrastructure etc., wherever it cannot be colonized by the Sinhalese.

2.Wipe out the resistance, whether in the form of freedom fighters or vocal opposition (these people disappear) and villify them all over the world.

3.Conduct a diplomatic war on the overseas Tamils.

There is no denying that he has had a measure of success in many of these areas except in his campaign to destroy the freedom fighters. His great dream is to see all Tamil resistance to the army quashed and the freedom fighters totally wiped out so that the Bhikkhus and Sinhala chauvinists can impose their will on the hapless Tamils and occupy the Tamils' land and destroy their heritage. **He wants to make his career and fortune out of the blood and tears of the Tamils. These are the appalling facts about a man who is sworn to decimate and reduce the survivors of his own ethnic group to a subject people in their ancestral homeland.**

Hounding the Tamils

Kad is evidently not satisfied with punishing just the Tamils of Eelam .He is hounding the Tamils wherever they are. The venom in his statements about the overseas Tamils is so strong it could come only from the worst type of reptile. We, the Tamils living outside Eelam have now to oblige this man and declare him our Great Enemy. We must return the favour and hound him the way he has done towards us. We must persecute him just not in his life-time but beyond - his memory. We must make an effigy of him and breed a colony of crows to defecate on it, unless we think that it is insulting to the crows !

He is, of course not going to remain Foreign Minister all his life. Even Kumaratunga may not keep him in the cabinet assuming she is in power then. Kad is very shrewdly using his official position to develop international connections and with the fortune he has already made will probably emigrate and set up shop elsewhere. The most likely place will be either U.S. or U.K. We, the overseas Tamils, must promise ourselves never to forget any of the atrocities committed by the government of Sri Lanka of which he is a minister and all the vicious campaigns Kad personally wages against the freedom struggle and against us.

Full time recreation

It is true that many Sinhala politicians have committed outrages against the Eelam people which are equally or more abominable. However, there is something absolutely revolting about a person of Tamil ancestry trying to crush his own people at the bidding and for the benefit of an alien group. **It is like a son committing the murder of his own mother for a few pennies offered by someone who he knows, is in the process of destroying his family ! That is why a traitor is hated more than the enemy himself.**

It is also true that there are a large number of Tamils who belong to the Sinhala government's paramilitary arm whose full-time recreation is the kidnapping, imprisonment, torture, murder, and otherwise making the lives of fellow Tamils miserable I am referring to the military wings of those parties like TELO, PLOT, EPRLF, EPDP, and of course the Razeek group which are funded, directed, and protected by the Sinhala government for the sole purpose of trying to frustrate the freedom fighters. The Eelam people in due course will deal with these people condign punishment just as any outraged society would do. But what is important to keep in mind is these traitors are the tools, albeit willing, of the government of which Kad is a decimaking and crucial member - head honcho of the traitors.. Besides, these people, despicable as they are, have so far not had the influence nor have they seriously attempted to denounce the overseas Tamils collectively. The Tigers, we hope, will take care of these groups. Kad, however, has been carrying on, to this date, an unrequitted hate affair against the overseas Tamils of Eelam too. This has to be stopped by all means.

The overseas Tamils should conduct an inquiry, in absentia necessarily, and get testimony from those who are more knowledgeable about his ill deeds. The inquiry should be fair and open to any representations that Kad may be willing to make. Kad can confidently do so with the assurance we the Tamils will not choose the Kandyan method (of dealing with Ehelepola). That is too gruesome and messy ! We should not sink to the level of the Kandyans. In the meanwhile we should make it known to Kad that we mean business by demonstrating against him at every occasion there is a chance to confront him. A "chamber of terrors" should be established everywhere the Tamils are in sufficient numbers to display every related information about the atrocities of the Sinhala government with a prominent and permanent place for Kad.

The mans perfidy

It is perhaps inappropriate for me to even adumbrate every practical step we should take to keep alive in the consciousness of our people the perfidy of this man except to say, in principle, that the overseas Tamils should consider this a priority. It is quite possible that Kad might "resign" from the government a little prematurely on some feigned "principle", take his loot and bolt. **That is why, like the Jewish people keeping track of the Nazis, we too should not only monitor his movements, but also document every word he speaks, every action he takes, every conspiracy he is part of. This is a duty, bounden and obligatory, of the overseas Tamils, in particular. Kadirgamar's declared war against us can be ignored only at our own peril.**

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN SRI LANKA

Professor Dr. John P Neelsen

EBERHARD-KARLS UNIVERSITY OF TUBINGEN, Germany, Institute of Sociology

1. In the name of fighting a terrorist threat against the unity of the country, successive governments of Sri Lanka have established a ***security state*** with terror as means and deterrence as aim, to isolate the insurgents from the rest of the population. This is nothing new as the historical experiences of Guatamala or the present situation in Algeria illustrate. While at first it may seem that the civilian authorities have lost control of the armed forces and are thus exculpated from the responsibility for the human rights violations, nothing could be further from the truth. **The security forces act not in opposition to, but rather in collusion with the government / the principal political parties.**

a) In their struggle for political power, the majority political parties in Sri Lanka, the UNP and the SLFP, have sought to play on the fears of the majority community, denouncing for short term political gains any sort of accomodation with the minority as a threat to the nation, betrayal and sell-out of the Sinhala race, effectively undermining every effort at a peaceful settlement.

b) **In the name of fighting the insurgency, successive governments have built up, armed and employed various military and paramilitary forces (army, police, Civil Defence Force, militias) in their fight against the LTTE and the people in the North and the East in particular. In consequence, the government can claim formal non-involvement in barbarous acts of torture, disappearances and extra-judicial killings as having been perpetrated by militias not under its control** (see in this context also the existence of 'non-authorised detention centres', not only in the North - East but also in Colombo).

c) Successive governments have used their power to emasculate parliament in favour of the executive. An all-powerful 'executive presidency' has been established as a result of which participatory democracy, including elections, have been rendered hollow, providing a democratic facade to an underlying authoritarian, nay repressive rule. Apart from these institutional changes, the due process of law has effectively been eliminated. Irrespective of the party in power a **state of emergency** with the consequent suspension of the constitution has been in force for over 25 years (continuously since 1983 except for five months). The enforcement of a state of emergency requires the regular sanction by parliament, a constitutional prerogative which the latter has discharged without fail every month.

Yet, this legality of the quasi permanent emergency lacks substance; ***formally*** constitutional it is devoid of ***material constitutionality***. For, parliament, symbol and ultimate repository of the sovereignty of the people, has only the right to extend, but not the right to debate or determine the particular conditions of a state of emergency. Subsequent legislation infringed upon even these outwardly democratic appearances. The **'Prevention of Terrorism Act' of 1979, the 'Emergency Regulations' of 1983** in general, and the **'Public Security Ordiance' of 1989** in particular, explicitly ***suspended*** civil and political rights and the ***due process of law***. These acts provide for the elimination of the judiciary in favour of the security forces. They allow indefinite, preventive and incommunicado detention. They legalise arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence by dispensing with the need for a warrant. They encourage torture by not only permitting in court the use of confessions made to the police, they place moreover the burden of proof on the defendant. Human rights violations have for all practical purposes been ***legalised*** because members of the security forces are granted exemption from legal prosecution for any act committed in good faith (before 1991; see also the Indemnity (Amendment) Act of 1988). Officers positively identified as personally involved in crimes have only rarely been prosecuted by the government; a few have even been promoted.

d) The promises made by the President and the government of the People's Alliance that rule the country since mid-1994, namely abolition of the executive presidency, recognition of the conflict as an ethnic problem based on real grievances of the minority which has to be addressed on the political level, have not been pursued in earnest. **It stands to reason that they were made for electoral purposes and in order to assuage the international community, not least the West on whose governments and investors Sri Lanka relies for investments, receipts from tourism and the rescheduling of its debts.** An overwhelming suspicion is nourished that it is not a political solution based on equal rights of all communities, the re-establishment of democracy and due process of law that is being sought. On the contrary, behind a conciliatory rhetoric and a policy of seemingly piecemeal implementation supposedly slowed by constitutional constraints, a ruthless war of annihilation is being waged to end the conflict by suppression once and for all.

2. In the case of Iraq, of Somalia as well as of Yugoslavia the Western governments have in the name of the international community as solely authorised actor intervened in order to put an end to the suppression of minority rights for which the internationally recognised governments of the respective states were held responsible. The persecution of the Kurds in

Northern and of the Shiites in Southern Iraq, the aggravating politico-economic situation of the mostly Albanian population in Kosovo, a province of Yugoslavia, the impediments to free access to starving population groups in Somalia for international aid organisations, were cited as reasons to set aside one of the central foundations of international law, the non-interference in the internal affairs of another country. Proclaimed as an evolution in international law, these interventions have been justified in the name of the **natural rights theory of human rights**, an approach which confers on everyone not only the right, but the duty to rectify human rights violations wherever they occur.

Despite the doubtful individual UN-mandate in the cases cited, one can only wonder why the Security Council which considered the persecution of minorities in Iraq as a threat to international peace, has remained silent concerning the war in Sri Lanka even though in the last fifeteen years 60,000 persons were killed in the North and East of the country alone, where large-scale systematic human rights violations, indicated by more that 22 742 officially confirmed cases of disappearances, have occurred, where hundreds of thousands of persons have been made internal refugees, where torture and ill-treatment, including rape continue to be widespread. Against this background, the attitude of the international community in general, of the governments of the West in particular with regard to the Tamils when compared to the one adopted towards the Kosovo Albanians remains unintelligible. Broad media coverage, continuous denunciation of the (Serbian) government in Belgrade, threat of sanctions and aerial bombardment, uninterrupted diplomacy, imposition of a pull-out of Serbian forces together with a ceasefire and an offer of international observers on the one hand, against an almost complete silence where the fate of the Tamils in Sri Lanka is concerned on the other.

3. In response, we are told that the possibilities for intervention are limited because of the problems closer at hand and in view of the already overstretched resources. But the idea of Sri Lanka being far removed from Europe / the West in terms of geography and politics, leaving nothing but an expression of sympathy is incorrect. In a globalised world, there is no question of non-involvement. Massive numbers of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka have sought political asylum not least in the West; until this month (November) this was a priori granted to them in Germany in recognition of their status as a persecuted minority. Moreover, Sri Lanka receives about 860 million US$ annually from the World Bank (through the Paris Aid Group) whose policy is decided upon by a handful of Western states. Without these financial transfers which are roughly equivalent to the Sri Lankan government's military expenditure the war could not be continued.

West an active participant

Finally, it is reported that the weapons used in the war against the Tamils, including missiles, tanks, combat aircraft, etc. are furnished by the West, in this case the UK. In other words, far from being a helpless, far-removed spectator, the West is an active participant, objectively aiding in and condoning the repression of minority rights by the Sri Lankan government.

It would not be the first time that international aid, investments and development projects are being conditioned on the observation of human rights. Already in the beginning of the 1990's, the American Congress was repeatedly asked to repeal Sri Lanka's 'Most Favoured Nation Status' when this question came up for the yearly renewal. Based on the dismal human rights record of the country, a restriction of its international trade would have drastic consequences for an export-oriented and import-dependent country like Sri Lanka.

A directly interventionist policy-option by the UN and/or on the part of the West in the former's name may not be available; it may not even be desirable from the point of view of national independence of the Third World and/or from the point of view of regional autonomy. However, today when the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is being celebrated everywhere (not least in the West) it is high time to offer more than a questionable residence permit to those Tamils who succeed in coming here as refugees in a foreign land. The root cause in terms of the grievances of the Tamils, of the war being waged against them and in whose wake human rights are violated on a massive scale for all, including the majority community, must be addressed. **What the European Union and its constituant nations can and should contribute in this situation is at least to stop its support for a repressive Sri Lankan government, and use its considerable economic and political leverage/power of sanction to induce the former to a basic policy change.** The measures forced upon Belgrade in terms of a cease-fire, withdrawal of the armed forces, respect for basic human rights in terms of ending torture, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, end of impunity should be within its reach and present a first step towards a better future.

4. To impose a solution from the outside, seems neither feasible nor warranted. The geographical distribution of the Sri Lankan population, the highly complex internal cultural and socio-economic differentiation of the minorities, the geopolitical position of the country as a whole, to say nothing of individual parts, render the process of accomodation apparently so difficult and painful that only those directly concerned must ultimately decide. But to help to lay the pre-conditions for such a process, in contrast to allowing a continuation of the suppression of the minority and the gross human rights violations in general in Sri Lanka is certainly a responsibility of the West.

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Mrs. Kumaratunga's distortion of history "disgusting"

says South African Human Rights Organisation,PASLO

14th November 1998.
To: The Editor,
Hot spring
Dear Sir,

We were shocked, but not surprised, at the statement made by Mrs Kumaratunga in an interview on South African Television, **stating that the Tamil people of Sri Lanka are not the original people of the country. It is disgusting for a head of state to make such a statement,** insinuating that the people who have lived in Ceylon for thousands of years, **are suddenly declared to be aliens in the land of their birth because they happen to be Tamil.**

History will prove that the Tamil people have always occupied the northern and eastern provinces. **It must be through pure ignorance, that the Sri Lankan government refuse to acknowledge this.** A statement like this could only come from a **Racist who is trying to justify the occupation of the Tamils land.**

It was the same kind of statements the **White Racist government** of South Africa made, when they tried to justify **Apartheid** in the sixties. No matter how the Sri Lankan government tries to camouflage the discrimination against the Tamil people of Ceylon, it is exactly the same as **apartheid was in South Africa**. We firmly believe that due to the collaboration between the Apartheid government of South Africa and the Sri Lankan government, the Sri Lankan government have learnt

and is using **the same tactics used by the White Racist government.** The Sri Lankan government cannot deny that they received arms from the Apartheid regime. When the Apartheid government of South Africa attacked homes in Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia, they claimed that they were attacking ANC targets, just as the Sri Lankan government claims when their air force bombs innocent villages in the Tamil Homeland. **The White government of South Africa branded everyone who was fighting for freedom, justice and equality as terrorist and even managed to convince some parts of the world to isolate them, just as the Sri Lankan government is attempting to do now.** It was the Reagan Administration in America and the Fletcher government of Britain who were fooled **by the White Racist government of South Africa,** just as the same two nations are fooled by the Sri Lankan government now. The Racist government of South Africa also claimed that apartheid was an internal problem and would be resolved by the people of South Africa, just as the Sri Lankan government is claiming now.

The Sri Lankan government is **attempting to fool the South African government** into believing the LTTE have military bases in South Africa and that our organisation is acting as a front for the LTTE. **This is totally untrue.**

Our organisation has welcomed any investigation into our activities by the South African government. **Thus, far, the South African government could not find anything wrong with our organisation.** We also have substantial **proof** that the person who appeared in the photograph, claiming to be the spokesperson of the South African Tamil Tigers, **was a spy for the White Apartheid government and has been recruited by the Sri Lankan government** to try and destroy our organisation and fool the South African government. **All the propaganda and dirty tricks of the Sri Lankan government will not fool our government.** We have gone through this before.

Our organisation is a Human Rights Organisation, with members from **all the racial groups in South Africa.** Many of our members were actively involved in fighting the Apartheid system under the banner of

PASLO: People Against Sri Lankan Oppression. P. O. Box 5581, Benoni South. 1502 Gauteng. Rep of South Africa. Tel/Fax No: (011) 421-3235

the ANC, and is now actively involved in fighting oppression in Sri Lanka. We are what our name stands for ***"People Against Sri Lankan Oppression"***. Just as we did not accept white oppression in South Africa, we will not accept black oppression in South Africa. The same goes for Sri Lanka, if the roles were reversed, we would do the same.

Not all our members are Tamils as is claimed by the Sri Lankan government, we have people from **all religions, cultures and background.** We all have a common goal, and that, is **to stop the oppression in Sri Lanka which is against the Tamil people.** Our organisation has branches throughout South Africa and our membership is growing fast. We are **Human Rights Activist** and **not terrorists as the Sri Lankan government claims.** If the Sri Lankan government has any proof to substantiate their claims, we welcome them to furnish it to our government for investigation.

In July this year, the Sri Lankan government claimed that we were raising money for the LTTE. We did not deny raising money, but we did acknowledges that we raised the money for the victims of the Sri Lankan governments oppression. The South African government has accepted this after investigations. **We will continue to raise money for the victims of the ethnic war** taking place in Sri Lanka. If any Sinhalese people feel that they also need our help, and we feel it is justified, we will help them as well.

The Sri Lankan government is **the only government in the world who uses food and medicine as weapons of war. The economic blockade of the Tamil Areas, is a crime against humanity.** We have on record **a Sri Lankan Member of Parliament,** confirming that the Sri Lankan government is trying to **wipe out the entire Tamil Nation,** that is why **they do not allow any food, medicine or other essential items into the Tamil Areas.** He also confirmed that there are **gross human right violations** taking place in Sri Lanka **against the Tamil people.** He also confirmed that the Sri Lankan government know that **there can be no military victory in Sri Lanka,** and that the only solution was through **peaceful negotiations with the LTTE,** but the Sri Lankan government **refuse to try the peaceful route and** will continue with it's military operations **to try and wipe out as many Tamils as possible.** If this is not **Systematic Genocide**, then what is?.

We welcomed an investigation onto the activities of our organisation, unlike the Sri Lankan government who denies access to the International Media and the world into the Tamil Areas, and lie to hide the atrocities they have commit. It seems like the Sri Lankan government is so scared that the world will see the atrocities and human right violations that it has committed, that it has to resort to **lies and propaganda** to hide their wrongs. **We challenge the government of Sri Lanka** to allow a fact finding mission that consist of **various human rights organisations** to visit the Tamil Areas unrestricted, and to draw their own conclusion. **If the Sri Lankan government has nothing to hide, they will allow this.**

Conclusion:

We earnestly appeal to all governments to support the efforts of the Tamil people of Ceylon, in finding a peaceful negotiated solution to this problem. Only through the intervention of the outside world, will the Sri Lankan government stop the Atrocities and Human Rights Violations in Sri Lanka. We urge all governments not to be fooled by the propaganda and dirty tricks of the Sri Lankan government, and to act soon to avoid the total destruction of the Tamil Nation in Ceylon.

Thanking You,
Yours Sincerely,

Signed Tommy M. Padotan.
(National Co-ordinator)

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South Africa's position misjudged by Sri Lanka

(From HOT SPRING correspondent in Pretoria)

President Mandela DID NOT give any assurance that "the LTTE will never be allowed to open an office in South Africa", as was claimed in a statement issued by the Sri Lanka High Commission here after the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister's meeting with South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo. This was made clear by official government sources here.

These sources told me that the question of the LTTE opening an office in South Africa did not arise, that there was no such request by that organisation, and that they were not aware of any such moves by that organisation. All that was told by Mr.Nzo to the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister was that South Africa will not tolerate any "terrorist activity being planned from South Africa" and would discourage anyone from associating with the LTTE.

This, the sources said, was not the same thing as promising that the LTTE would not be allowed to open an office in South Africa. South Africa's constitution, they said enshrined freedom of expression, which prevents an organisation from being banned purely on what it says. Hypothetically, the sources said, that if the LTTE opened an office without conducting terrorist activities, it would be difficult to justify banning it.

By claiming in its statement that Mr.Nzo had conveyed the "categorical assurance" from Mandela that the LTTE will not be allowed to open an office in South Africa, the High Commission had permitted itself to mislead opinion both in South Africa and Sri Lanka, these government sources said. ❑

Ratwatte was arrested for inciting anti-Tamil riots in 1977!

Ratwatte, the pretentious "General", President Kumaratunga's uncle, the effective No.2 in the PA government, and the man who has been leading the losing war against the Tigers these past few years, is also a man with a history. Sordid history. Not many people will remember it now, but he was arrested once for inciting mob rioting against the Tamils. That was 21 years ago, in 1977.

Martin Woollacott of THE GUARDIAN, London, who was covering the riots sent the following despatch for his paper dated 27 August 1977:

"After a fortnight of rioting in the island,during which the majority Sinhalese have attacked, looted and killed minority Tamils, the new United National Party Government of Mr.J.R. Jayawardene seem to be bringing the situation under control.

To do so, it has had to impose an island-wide curfew for the first time since the 1971 insurgency and operate special contingency plans for military administration designed in case of a new insurgenay.

"But the cost of this affair - assuming it is over - cannot be considered fully accounted merely listing the fifty or so deaths, the many injuries, the considerable property damage, and the large number of Tamils who have fled or who have been moved to safety by the authorities . At the very least, the riots have further diminished the chances of a permanent reconciliation between the Sinhalese and Tamils, which is one of Jayawardene's main aims. They may have damaged it irreparably.

"Stirring up the explosive race and language issue in Sri Lanka has been a standard ploy of defeated politicians since the Fifties. The United National Party, now in power again, did it in 1956, and Mrs.Bandaranaike's Freedom Party did it in 1965. It has always been easy to upset the Sinhalese by suggesting to them that things that were rightfully theirs were being taken away by the "clever" Tamils, or by the island's other minorities.

Ratwatte

"There were no particular reason, however, for a fresh outburst of Sinhala - Tamil hostility at this moment.. True, the Tamil party, which calls itself the Tamil United Liberation Front and aims theoretically at independence for the Tamil-populated northern areas, emerged in last month's general elections as the only significant opposition party. And Mr.Jayewardene had announaed that he intended to call a conference to try to settle the Sinhala-Tamil question. But the Tamils were treading very carefully, and certainly had no intention of offering any provocation to the Sinhalese. The conclusion therefore is inescapable that. whether or not the inaident that started it all - a riot involving Sinhalese police in the Tamil "capital" of Jaffna - was fabricated, the riots elsewhere were not spontaneous. The most likely culprits are members of the Freedom Party, an organisation that built its political fortunes on Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinism.

"It should be noted that among those arrested as having contributed to the riots are a former Minister, Tikiri Banda Tennekoon, a man who spoke no English, let alone Tamil, and who had been prominent in the Fifties language movement, and COLONEL ANURUDHA RATWATTE, MRS.BANDARA NAIKE'S FORMER SECURITY ADVISER. It looks very much as if disgruntled Freedom Party leaders in many places saw an opportunity to embarass the government and, with the collusion of some Freedom Party police appointees and of local gangsters, organised and encouraged the attacks on Tamils.

"The central problem of Sri Lankan politias is well illustrated by the fact that Mr.Jayewardene, in spite of his large majority, and although he was faced with a situation that Sinhalese alearly were the aggressors, still felt it politically necessary to warn the Tamils.

'The damage that all this had done could be enormous. Immediately after the election results, Tamils in Colombo were confiding privately that they thought it possible that Jayewardene, with his large majority, might be able to offer terms that would satisfy their real, if not their theoretical aspirations. The Tamil United Liberation Front's leading members were willing to accept a good deal less than its formal programme of independenae to be achieved by violence if neaessary. But there is nothing like killing and looting to harden a people's resolve, and the last fortnight can only bring aloser the time when the Tamil Liberation Front may become in reality what it already is in name.

Continued from page 4

under the USA and UNDP sponsored regime of Chandrika. It would greatly benefit the world of the lessable people,(handicapped) if UNDP can commission an unbiased report on the amputees as they will form a visible and sizeable population both in Sri Lanka and the future State of Eelam. I do not know whether UNDP discounts the amputees as half persons or non-persons, if not how do you account your connivance with a State that is sowing land-mines and anti-personal mines like sowing paddy seeds in the North and East? What have you done to prevent this horrible development that is taking place in Jaffna after the invasion?

4. It was President Chandrika and her uncle Ratwatte who have also set an unbeaten record in the endless production of refugees and displaced persons. It was under Chandrika's diabolical regime that the entire city of Jaffna, the second largest city in Ceylon bacame a ghost-city on October 30, 1995. Once again I was both a victim and a witness to this unimaginable tragedy. A President who created half a million refugees in one single week is named by you as an agent of democratic development. How do you then define development?

5. In the post-colonial history of the island of Ceylon, it was under Chandrika's regime that the largest number of Sinhala military personnel are deployed in the Tamil homelands especially in Jaffna, Batticaloa and Vanni. Nothing can be a more glaring example of military subjugation and repression. And you still call this development?

6. It is after Chandrika assumed power that the largest number of Tamil civilians suffered arrest, torture, detention, merciless interrogation or held in custody without any judicial process etc. You seem to consider this humiliation of a community as a sign of development.

7. With the exclusion of the anti-Tamil pogrom of 1983, if you count the the largest number of Tamil civilians killed during the term of each President, it is under Chandrika's regime that more than 13,000 Tamils have died. The other fact is that the largest number of Sinhala military personnel also died in the war under her absurd governance. I still find it difficult to understand the philosophy of development advocated by UNDP. Are death and development two parallel colums without any connection whatsoevr?

"A President who created half a million refugees in one single week is named by you as an agent of democratic development. How do you then define development, Ms. Lisa Hiller?"

8. The most cruel form of economic and medical embargo has been rigourously imposd by the government of President Chandrika on a hapless and helpless population especially in Vanni and you wish to promote this form of development as the most ideal one in South Asia.

9. The worst form of media censorship on foreign and local media net work is imposed by this government and you see this as a tool of development.

10. It is under Chandrika's government that education in all levels had taken a severe beating. The worst is in the North and East. More than two hundred primary and secondary school buildings and college buildings (e.g. Mahajana College and Union College Tellipallai, Vasavilan Mahavidyalaya, Coleges and Schools at Atchuvely are all occupied by teh army since 1992. More than 40 per cent (the largst number since 1983) of the schools in jaffna are occupied by teh army in addition to the occupation or demolition of a very large number of private houses and properties - all this under the supervision of the Deputy Minister of Defence and the President herself. You call this atrocity as a model of development. Truly one should be out of one's depths to categorise these as a program of democratic development.

Now I wish to state in no uncertain terms that as a matter of conscience I will extend my support to any non-violent and democratic effort that helps to cripple or strangle the economic development of the evil State of Sri Lanka which thrives by engaging in a systematic, cultural, educational, political, physical and economic genocide of the Tamil nation. Non-cooperation with evil is a basic human value if not a duty. Every Tamil living abroad or in Ceylon should engage himself or herself in this national duty.

Dear Madam Hiller, I place these facts not only for your perusal but for your Humanitarian reflection and therefore effective action toward alleviating the suffering of the poor people from among the Sinhalese and Tamils who are paying daily the heaviest price for this ugly war conducted with the blessings of the UNDP. Your vision of development surely lacks a human and a humanitarian content, until that is there all rhetoric about development will only be a lucative discourse filling the purse of the so called experts on "the economic development of the third or fourth world (the nations in war).

Kasi Ananthan: Poet Laureate of Tamil Eelam

Dr.T.Wignesan

Paris, France

"How long may we stay in another man's land" - sang poet Kasi Ananthan, in a Tamil poem that begins with the words: "The parrot and the woodpecker may return to their nests without hindrance, but we the Tamil refugess may not". Dr.T.Wignesan who has translated the poem into English, writes here about Kasi Ananthan:

Born in 1938 in Batticaloa, in the Eastern province of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), he began writing poetry at the early age of twelve. As the ethnic crisis in the country began to gather momentum from the fifties onwards, the budding poet in Tamil soon found himself at odds with the declaration of SINHALA ONLY for the entire country. He manifested his unrelenting opposition by painting over public name boards in the Sinhala script in public places in 1957. He was arrested by the Sinhalese authorities and was not released until after a period of two years during which period he was subjected to extreme torture by his jailors, with the result that he contacted tuberculosis. Despite the state of his physical suffering,, or rather even because of it. he vowed not to let go his mother tongue, the Tamil language, in which he was more than eminently gifted.

Soon after his release, he went to Tamil Nadu to pursue his studies in Tamil literature and linguistics, and there at Pachayappa's College under the care and tuition of such renowned teachers as Professor M.Varatharasan and Dr.N.Sanjeevi, he developed his talents both for the language and his creative instincts. While in Tamil Nadu, he established contact with the revolutionary anti-Brahmin rationalist movement leader "Periyar" E.V.Ramaswami.

In 1963, he returned to Ceylon and was soon engaged in an official capacity as a translator in the Translation Bureau of the government. But when the Sinhala government of Mrs.Bandaranaike declared the country a republic and foisted the the Sinhala ideals of an exclusive Sinhala Buddhist nation, he decided to surrender his official post and make his - opposition felt through militant action. In 1979 he married, and has two daughters.

Kasi Ananthan

At the beginnings of the ethnic problem, Kasi Ananthan adhered to the policies of the Federal Party led by S.J.V.Chelvanayakam, but after the latter's death and the emergence of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) under the leadership of Amirthalingam, he found the TULF too ineffectual for his aims. In the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), he found the true spirit of liberation that he yearned for and became an active member of the LTTE's political movement. When the Tigers sought refuge in India following the proscription of the movement by the Jayewardene government, Kasi Ananthan himself moved to India, where he still remains in Chennai under police surveillance.

The Tigers have bestowed on him the title "Unarchik Kavignar" meaning the poet of emotional commitment. He is reputed to have once proclaimed "Pirapaharan ninaittatu natakkum" (What Prabhakaran thinks/wishes /wants will happen"). He once served as a member of a peace delegation that met the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, months before the latter's death.

Kasi Ananthan's songs/poems in support of the Tigers and Tamil Eelam numbering more than four hundred, have earned for him tremendous popularity from Tamils all over the world, including those in Tamil Nadu. It is even said of him that he is the greatest recruiter of guerillas for the cause of Tamil Eelam. **Youngsters on hearing his songs and poems become so motivated and fired that they drop everything, - studies, families and jobs just to join the ranks and fight for an independent land of their own.**

In commenting on Kasi Ananthan's following poem, Dr.Wignesan says: It is not an overstatement to say that - from the point of diction, rhythm, rhyme, that is, where the sense lies perfectly bound up with the sound - this poem comes as near to capturing the ultimate sense of loss of the Eelam diaspora, and may not be easily excelled even by the poet himself, in any other of his verse compositions for song.

❑❑❑

The parrot and the woodpecker can return to their nests, but not we to our homeland....

The marriage of Sound and Sense in a Poem on the Tamil Diaspora and Eelam by Poet Kasi Ananthan translated into English by Dr.T.Wignesan. Musical rendition of the poem by Thenisai Chellappa of Tamil Nadu.

The parrot and the woodpecker
their nests to regain no hindrance wayalays
only we in all this world
our homeland to seek may not return
our homeland to seek may not return
(above refrain repeated twice)

From skies filled with Sinhalese planes fire tumbles down in seething showers
Our lifeblood , our Tamil Eelam a simmering graveyard on fire
While mothers rave in pain children's breasts the oppressor tears apart
Long before they might ripen tender the buds crushed from burgeoning
(Refrain)

Those who begot us back home tossing and turning in their longing for us
For how many days might we linger on in the other man's refugee land.
Without ingesting proper food without knowing sound sleep
Unable rightly even to think when will the day dawn for us
(Refrain)

We who played at kitti pullu joyously in the heedless streets*
There now tethered others lie felled no no hearts pain for us.
When our eyes light on letters from home sobs prise open our brimming breasts
By the flanks of battling Tigers there to be our hearts palpitatingly yearn
(Refrain)

*Note: * A competitive game played by hitting a small stick with a bigger one, the goal being to cover the greatest distance. Also called in Tamil Nadu and Malaysia: kavuntA kavanti.*

Panic precautions in Colombo:

Anti aircraft guns over Parliament!

COLOMBO,: Anti-aircraft guns were mounted to defend the Sri Lankan parliament from rebel air attacks, in late November as Tamil Tiger guerrillas marked a week-long commemoration of their dead. Opposition legislators said three guns had been placed in and outside the parliament building located on a lake island and manned from November 23 as part of tight security arrangements.

Government members tried to shout down opposition Parliamentarians who brought up the issue of anti-aircraft guns but former prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said members had a right to know the threat against the national assembly. **The latest government move came as security was strengthened in and around the capital amid reports that the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had acquired aircraft.**

Sri Lanka has also imposed a limited ban on domestic flying to prevent aircraft being hijacked for an attack against vital installations in Colombo. Sri Lankan troops and police on the ground have stepped up patrols and road blocks as the "Heroes' Week" of the LTTE entered its third day . The rebels usually organise religious services to invoke blessings on their fighters killed in action but the military accuses the guerrillas of also staging attacks to mark Heroes' Week, .

Sri Lanka's Parliamentary complex: An aerial view

"There is a high state of alert sounded in Colombo as well as in the suburbs," a police spokesman said. "It is usual to take extra precautions at this time of the year." Troops have also been told to be extra vigilant amid fears of fresh guerrilla attacks in the north and east of the country, where the LTTE is fighting to establish an independent state. Last year, there were no major attacks during Heroes' Week. In a message to mark the occasion last year, LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran urged his supporters to fight on, saying there was no liberation without death, destruction, bloodshed and sacrifice. Prabhakaran, Sri Lanka's most wanted man, said he was not opposed to talks with the government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga, a member of the majority Sinhalese community, but did not expect success. . ❐

Tamil Tigers take to skies, reports BBC

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels have said for the first time that they are operating aircraft, says a BBC report dated November 28.

Intelligence reports suggest the Tigers have assembled two small fixed-wing planes which could be used to blow up large installations using suicide pilots.

The clandestine Voice of Tiger radio said two aircraft were used on Friday as part of their heroes week celebrations to commemorate the thousands of rebels killed in the 15-year conflict.

SKY Tigers

The aircraft were said to have dropped flowers on a cemetery where fighters are buried in Mulliyavalai in the Tiger-controlled area of the north-east.

It is not clear if they were helicopters or fixed-wing aircraft.

The radio report comes a week after Sri Lankan authorities installed anti-aircraft guns at the national parliament in the capital Colombo.

Military officials said they had no firm evidence the rebels had airpower, but admitted the navy had recently fired at unidentified flying objects in the north of the island after seeing flashes on a radar screen.

Our Sri Lanka correspondent Susanna Price says the Tigers already have well-equipped ground troops and a fleet of boats but this is the first time they have referred to using aircraft.

I support the LTTE's political stand, says Kumar Ponnambalam

A defiant Tamil Congress Leader Kumar Ponnambalam in the centre of controversy over a no-holds barred interview given on Swarnavahini talk show "Rathu Ira" has said he was prepared to face any consequences. "I, like a true supporter of the LTTE's political stand, will face any consequence," he told the *Sunday Leader*.

Ponnambalam, facing questions from viewers in a live telecast on November.17 said he was not a member of the LTTE but fully supported the political objectives of the organisation. He however refused to speak on the military objectives of the LTTE.

Consequent to the programme, complaints were made by several persons to the police urging that action be taken against Ponnambalam for publicly expressing support for the LTTE,spokesman for Swarnavahini told the *Sunday Leader*. The police took custody of the tapes and recorded the statement of a senior executive of the company.

Ponnambalam who left for Malaysia on a previously arranged programme on 19th November told The Sunday Leader he would not be cowed by threats of police action but asked whether there was no freedom of expression in the country. "In this gestapo land, who are these cowards that have complained against me? All that I spoke of was the political stand of the Tamils, Tigers and myself," he said. "I see this as retaliation for exposing the tapes on President Kumaratunga's South African statement relating to the origins of the Tamil people."

Ponnambalam also said the very fact the state was considering charging him for exercising his right of free expression indicates the minorities have no place in the `Sinhala nation'. "When I am called for a TV programme and questioned on my political beliefs am I to say only what the government wants to hear and be charged if I speak in keeping with my conscience?" **he asked. "When the president was accused of stating she will personally attack Tamils if the Tigers attacked places of religious worship, no such inquiry was launched." "No one dared complain but when I express my views, the police are let loose. Is this the right to equality the government is promising the Tamil people?" Ponnambalam also asked.**

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Fly Air Lanka at your peril!

COLOMBO, Passengers arriving at Sri Lanka's international airport on November 16th were forced to sweat it out inside the aircraft after a sudden strike by ground handling staff prevented them disembarking.

Employees of the national carrier Air Lanka, who are responsible for ground handling, walked out in the afternoon over a trade union dispute, bringing work at the Bandaranaike International airport to a standstill. "Things were back to normal in about an hour or so," a spokesman for the airport said. "Air Lanka staff did not bring the ladders for passengers to get off planes and that caused some delays." There were flight delays as well, officials said.

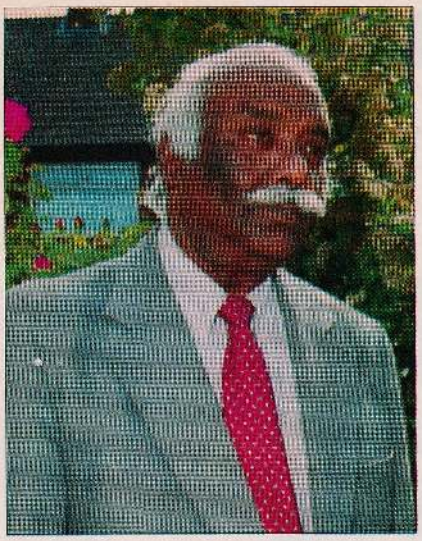
A spokesman for Air Lanka, which is partly owned and fully managed by the Emirates air line of Dubai, said the dispute was resolved and their employees went back to work. "The strike was due to a misunderstanding," he said.

The carrier has had a run of bad luck that month. A cargo door from an Air Lanka Tristar passenger aircraft fell off in mid-air as it was about to land at Bandaranaike airport earlier this month.

In a second incident involving an Air Lanka aircraft, the technical staff at Rome airport were unable to unlock a jammed cargo door and the plane had to return to Colombo with the passengers' luggage on board.

An Air Lanka flight also delayed the visit to Sri Lanka by the British Foreign Office Minister Derek . The Airbus A-340 bringing Fatchett from London to Colombo developed trouble while flying over France and was forced to return. **Fatchett, who arrived safely a day later on another flight, said it had been a harrowing experience.** ❑

A call for global solidarity of all oppressed peoples



S.Maharasingam,

In a atatement sent to the "PEACE IN KURDISTAN CAMPAIGN" meeting held in London recently, **Mr.S.Maharasingam,** Chairman of Tamil Action Committee says:

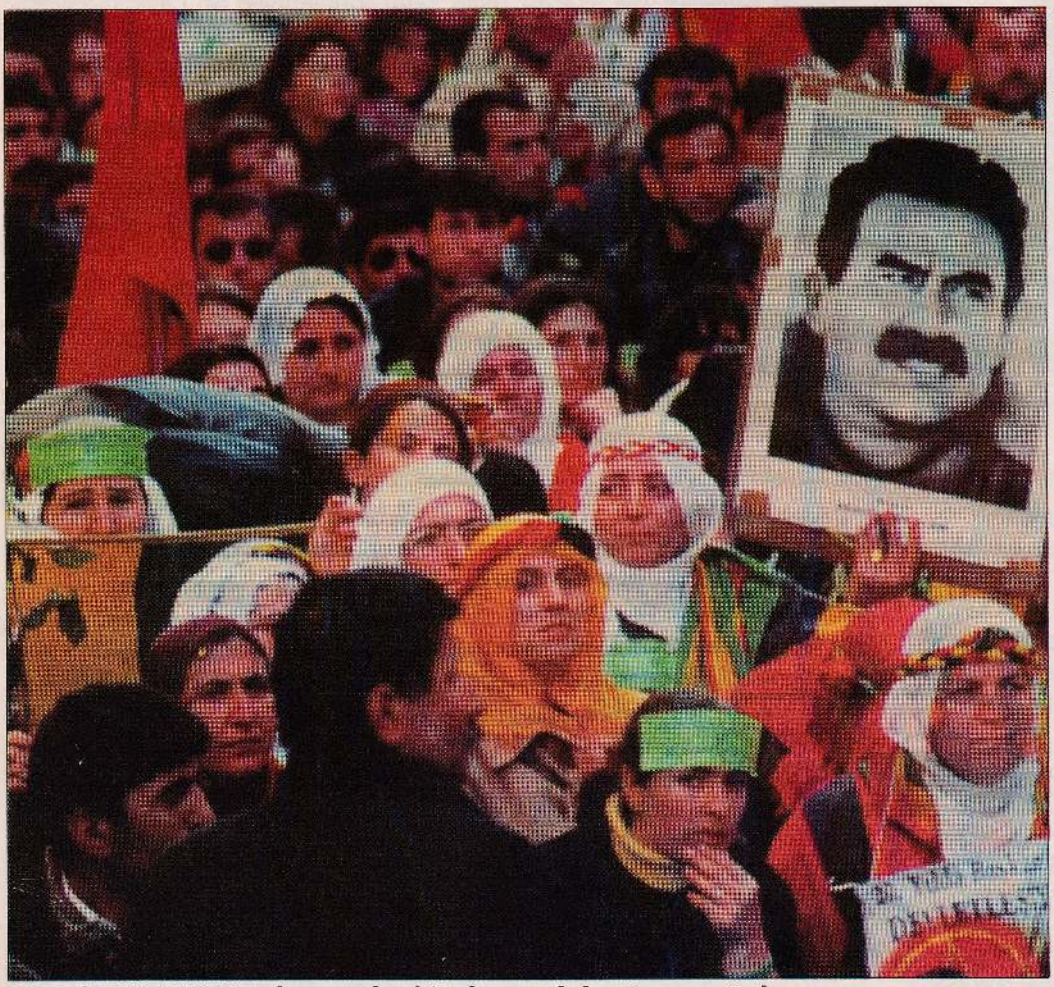
"Comrades, The struggle to defend and protect our motherland and mother tongue binds the Kurdish people and the Tamil people in a common liberation against our oppressors - the Turkish generals and politicians and the Sinhala generals and politicians

"We respect the undisputed leader of the Kurdish people Abdulla Ocalan and the voice of freedom of the Kurdish Workers' Party as we respect our undisputed leader of the Eelam struggle Velupillai Prabhakaran and raise our close-fisted hands.

"It is very significant indeed that today, while General Pinochet the dictator of Chile was declared not immune from prosecution outside Chile for the brutalities committed on the Chilean people during his reign of terror, the Italian government, a most respected member of the European Union, has granted political asylum to the PKK leader in Italy. I am sure you will discuss this important turning point on the side of the struggle of the Kurdish people for their inalienable rights. Is this the beginning of the ultimate death of colonialism and institutional racism?

"What difference is there between General Pinochet and Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz and Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga whose government tortures and kills Tamils with impunity ? The British Law Lords' decision gives additional strength to the International Criminal Court which can now extend its right to try heads of state. They are no longer exempt from the international law and the community to get away with impunity.

"We call for the global solidarity of all oppressed peoples today".



Nearly 10,000 Kurds marched in front of the Roman Colosseum chanting "We will die for you Ocalan"

Message to Italian Prime Minister

In a separate message sent to the Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema, Palazzo Chigi, 00187 Rome, Mr. Maharasingam has hailed the release of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan as "a noble act of humanty".

Chandrika Effigy Burning Campaign in Tamilnadu

Thousands of demonstrators participated at various centres all over Tamil Nadu condemning Sri Lankan government's attempt to cover up the Chemmani mass graves of over 400 Tamils killed and buried by the government forces.

The agitation which was named the "Chandrika Effigy Burning Campaign" covered about twenty centres in Tamil Nadu and was spearheaded by the Tamil Eelam Supporters Front. More than 2,000 demonstrators were arrested by the police in Madras, Madurai, Trichy, Erode, Thanjavur, Salem,Vellore, Paddukoddai,Puthuvai, Dindukal and Vilupuram. More than fifty Tamil organisations lent their support to the state-wide campaign.

Pictures show campaigners in some of the centres

Mauritius withdraws banknotes after Tamil protests

PORT LOUIS, Mauritius: The central Bank of Mauritius (BoM) said on November 19 that it had started to withdraw its new family of banknotes after thousands of Tamils took to the street protesting that their language appeared last on the notes.

The episode has cost the government more than $2 million. Mauritian banknotes have traditionally carried the denominations written in English, Tamil and Hindi scripts - in that order. Last month, the central bank issued a new series of notes - in English, followed by Hindi and then Tamil.

The Tamil community in Mauritius was outraged. Thousands took to the streets protesting that their community had been slighted.

The government of Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam then asked the central bank to withdraw the notes.

"It's a great victory for all Tamil militants," Tamil Council leader Devarajen Kanaksabee said. "The controversial family of banknotes was a deliberate affront at the history of this country and more especially at the Tamil culture."

The Tamils, who hail mainly from southern India, constitute around 10 percent of the Mauritian population of 1.2 million.

Their claim for precedence over Hindi-speakers-who make up another 40 percent of the population - was based on traditional practice and their claim to have arrived on the island before the Hindi-speaker.

Moslems make up another 16 percent of the islanders, while Creoles - the mixed-blood descendents of the former African slaves brought to the islands in the 18th century - account for up to 30 percent of the population. Neither Arabic nor Creole - the lingua franca of the island - appears on the currency.

Concede the North to the Tigers:

A Sinhala point of view

The Sunday Island, Colombo, in its issue of 22 November '98 carries the following Letter to the Editor, written by Shivaji F.de Zoysa of Colombo 4:

"This is written not from the head but from the heart.

"Very simply, let us give them (the Tigers) the North, the North only. We keep the East.

"Both sides have fought the good fight, both sides have won some and lost some, both sides have spent (or should we say squandered) immense sums of money, both sides have lost precious young lives, both sides have thousands of handicapped and disabled youth to look after and enough is enough.

"We simply give them the Northern Province - the State of Eelam. We set up a DMZ (De-militarised zone) across the country like between North and South Korea and have a single highway and a Checkpoint Charlie connecting the two. Different currency, visas, passports, the whole lot.

"As a gesture of goodwill and sincerity, we give them not only Mannar jetty but also Palaly airbase intact, complete with radar, radios etc. etc. - the whole airbase intact.

"This will be a gesture of goodwill and sincerity. We have buildings of 40 storeys in Colombo. Let them build one of 60 stories in Jaffna. Let us both give up this foolishness which benefits no one but the vultures (otherwise known as arms dealers) and live happily ever after taking good care of the legacy of disabled young people that we have nbeen left with. Let us tell them to leave us alone, to do anything they like up North, but simply leave us in peace.

"Naturally, this agreement will have to be mediated by a third party, perhaps the UN, and we also get a written assurance from the UN and the USA that if, subsequent to our handing over the North, the Tigers continue hostilities, then the USA and the UN will step in promptly and take military action against the Tigers. This is important because we cannot trust them (the Tigers) completely.

"Let us put this proposal to the people. Let us have a referendum islandwide whether to give them the North (we keep the East including Trinco) and call it quits or whether to continue this senseless tragedy. I'm sure the people will see the light and vote for partition.

"Any Tamil who is unhappy living as a minority citizen under a Sinhalese government in the new Sri Lanka is at perfect liberty to buzz off and live in the State of Eelam. This is a serious blueprint for a lasting peace. Please take it seriously. It is an elegant and effective solution to a most vexing problem.

"I have had this idea in my head for some time now and sincerely believe that it is the best solution available to us. I have no way of giving this idea exposure to the general public and hence I write to you. I would be most grateful if you publish this letter in your esteemed newspaper so that people may read it.

"As I said at the start, this is not written from the head it is written from the heart. Too much blood has been split. Too many young lives have been permanently scarred and traumatized. Let us not be vain and arrogant. The North is of very little use to us. Let's give it to them and all live happily ever after. Sounds wonderful ? I certainly think so. Let us have a referendum and let the people decide. These decisions are too important to leave in the hands of politicians. Bear that in mind.

Shivaji F.de Zoysa
Colombo 4

Note by Ed. HS: *We invite HOT SPRING readers to respond to Mr. de Zoysa's letter in whatever way they think is appropriate. Send us your comments, but try to be brief as far as possible.*

Power failure hits the whole island

Sri Lanka suffered an island-wide power failure on Friday which officials of the state electricity utility said could have been triggered by lightning.

Officials said power had been fully restored in the capital Colombo and elsewhere by late Friday.

"We believe power tripped because of lightning," an official at the main systems control centre of the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) said.

The state radio quoted CEB officials as saying they were investigating the cause of power failure.

Earlier D.G.D.C. Wijeratne, CEB's additional general manager for transmission, said the power failure, which occurred around 3:45 p.m. (0945 GMT), was island-wide.

Fire brigade officials said they had not received any complaints of serious incidents related to the power failure.

"We haven't heard of people stuck in lifts. There haven't been any rescue calls," a fire brigade official said.

Another official said a small fire had been reported at the local head office of ANZ Grindlays Bank in Colombo's main Fort business district.

Bank officials said the fire started due to overheating of the generator, but added that it had been extinguished.

The staff was evacuated and nobody was injured, the official said, adding details of the damage were not immediately known.

Indian govt. ban on LTTE must go, says Vaiko

"The Tamil Tigers are not terrorists, but freedom fighters. Just because a few of them have been accused of the Rajiv Gandhi assassination,it is not fair to ban the entire organisation. The ban must go".

This is what Vaiko (V.Gopala swamy), a staunch ally of the Vajpayee government told the Tamil fortnightly published in Chennai, the NANTHAN. The interview was mainly focused on the Eelam Tamil issue. Vaiko is a member of the Indian Parliament and General Secretary of the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, a growing political force in Tamil Nadu.

Meeting with U.S. officials

R.Bhagwan Singh reporting from Chennai says:"The MDMK chief told the magazine, known for its pro-LTTE leanings, that during his recent trip to the U.S. he had strongly pleaded the cause of the LTTE with the U.S. State Department officials. He had told them that it was wrong to brand the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam as terrorists when they were actually fighting for a Tamil homeland from a "racist" Sinhala regime which had perpetrated gross human rights violations against the ethnic minority Tamils in the island.

"There was nothing wrong in the Tamils of India supporting the LTTE, he had argued with U.S.officials, pointing out that the I.R.A. had received similar support from the Irish in the U.S., including President Bill Clinton. A White House official had even revealed that vital information was supplied from there to the IRA, Mr.Vaiko told the magazine.

Support in Tamil Nadu

"He added that he had strongly refuted the US contention that the LTTE at present lacked support in Tamil Nadu, telling officials in Washington that support for the LTTE existed in the hearts of Tamils in India, particularly the youth. "It will explode at the right time", Mr.Vaiko recalled telling US officials while dismissing their apprehensions about the LTTE's intention to establish a pan-Tamil nation as a systematic disinformation campaign by the Sri Lanka government.

Vaiko

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11,500 Tamils flee in the face of army offensive

11,500 more Tamils were displaced internally, as the latest Sri Lankan army offensive codenamed "Rivi Bala". got under way. Following intensive shelling by the Sri Lankan army on civilian habitations in the Oddusuddan area, people who lived in Oddusuddan, Muthalyan Kaddu, Katchilaimadhu and neigbouring villages fled in a massive exodus to the Mullaitivu area. They were housed in seven schools in Puthukudiyiruppu.

The Government Agent, Mullaitivu, Mr.R.Tharmakulasingam, who was away in Colombo at the time, is reported to have rushed back to Mullaitivu to organise relief and shelter for these people who were temporarily accommodated in the schools.

A civilised offer and a civilised reply!

"We are open to the civilised method of resolving conflict through retional dialogue"

- LTTE leader V.Prabhakaran in his Martyrs' Day message.

"The LTTE are a pack of murderers".

- Sri Lanka Foreign Minister Kadirgama quoted in the government-owned Daily news.

How the Western Press sees it

Civil war without end

Tamil Tiger rebels and government troops fight on, and on.

The past week has been Heroes' week for some Sri Lankans. Most have ignored it. "Villains" week, you mean," says the otherwise composed Sri Lankan trimming the hair of The **Economist**'s correspondent in a Colombo hotel. He is Sinhalese, like three-quarters of all Sri Lankans. The "heroes" are dead guerrillas from the Tamil minority, the other side of an interminable civil war. It might be thought that there would be respect for all the dead , but sentiment has long been a casualty of the war.

When the national army overran rebel territory last year, it bulldozed the gravestones in guerrilla cemeteries, claiming that they were used for propaganda. In a way they were Cremation is usual in Sri Lanka, except for Christians and some other minorities, but the guerrillas try to bury all their dead so that "hero families" can visit the graves and tell stories of their children's exploits.

Sinhala scepticism

There is among the Sinhalese a similar scepticism over the offer of peace talks from the guerrilla group that calls itself the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, better known as the Tamil Tigers. On November 27th, at the end of Heroes' week, their leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, proposed "initial talks" with the government officials, and nothing was likely to come of it.

Opinions differ over when the confict started. Those with long memories say August 1972, when Mr.Prabhakaran threw some bombs at a carnival in Jaffna, the main city of northern Sri Lanka, where the Tamils live-Tamil Eelam, as they call it. A bit later Tamil groups started to call for a separate state on the north and east of the country. The strongest group was, and is, the Tamil Tigers.

So it is about a quarter of a century, give or take a year, since the Tamils and the majority Sinhalese started to clash. It could be 25 more before they stop. Indeed this conflict shares some features with the debilitating struggle between the English and the French in the 14th and 15th centuries it became known as the hundred years' war. "Wooden-headedness was conspicu-

The Economist

ous," wrote Barbara Tuchman of that war, As in that war too, there have been times when the two sides in Sri Lanka have fought each other to a standstill. Then there comes talk of peace, as the Tigers are talking now, and a truce is arranged-which, as in Europe 600 years ago, merely stretches the war out. The starving and needy civilians in the war zone start to get used to not being bombed or shot at. But the truce is quickly abandoned once the armies have regained their breath and rebuilt their arsenals.

In its 25 years, feelings about the war have changed a little ,as new generations have come to adulthood. A banker in Colombo says he is worried that his son would be ready to give to Tamils their separate stare, so that the island could at least return to peace, And there are Tamils who would accept a settlement short of an independent state, Sri Lanka, though, has two strong leaders who seem determined to fight to the finish, whenever that may be Mr Prabhakaran's fearsome reputation is such that whatever dissent may exist among his followers is kept to themselves.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga is equally tough in her own way. To her followers, she is the "iron lady" . The hundred years' war ended when Joan of Arc finally rallied the French against the English. Without pushing the reference to absurdity, it may be said that Mrs. Kumaratunga came to prominence in Sri Lanka at the moment when a popular leader with cleat ideas was desperately needed.

She was elected president in 1994 promising to bring peace to the island. Superficially at least, there seemed to be the basis of an understanding between her and the Tigers' leader. She came from a socialist family, Her mother Sirimavo Bandaranaike, ran Sri Lanka as a socialist state in the 1960s and 1970. Mr. Prabhakaran also professes to be a socialist, of the Leninist sort. There were meetings, but no meeting of minds. Mrs Kumaratunga decided that the Tigers were not interested in negotiation and turned to her generals.

A Tamil State

For some time the army had been pursuing a policy of containment towards the Tigers. The Jaffna peninsula, in the very north of the island, was being run like a Tamil state in miniature, could the army mount a full offensive take Jaffna and return it to the control of the government in Colombo, putting down the Tigers' insurgency once and for all? The army said, with enthusiasm, that it could. And so-half way-it did, In November 1995 the army steamrollered its way to Jaffna town, the rebels' headquarters, in a few weeks. These were heady times for the generals. The operation, Victory Assured, seemed aptly named. **But the Tigers survived, Before the army arrived, they abandoned the town, taking much of the population with them, and disappeared into the northern jungle, from which they still continually harass the government forces.**

While the army holds Jaffna town and parts of the Jaffna peninsula, it has been unable to secure a safe road to the south, and has to supply its farces by air and sea. In September it gained Mankulam from town of Kilinochchi, Both need to be in the government's hands if it is to control the road through the Elephant Pass to Jaffna. Even Jaffna town is scarcely safe, Two mayors elected since the army took over have been murdered by the Tigers. The job is now vacant.

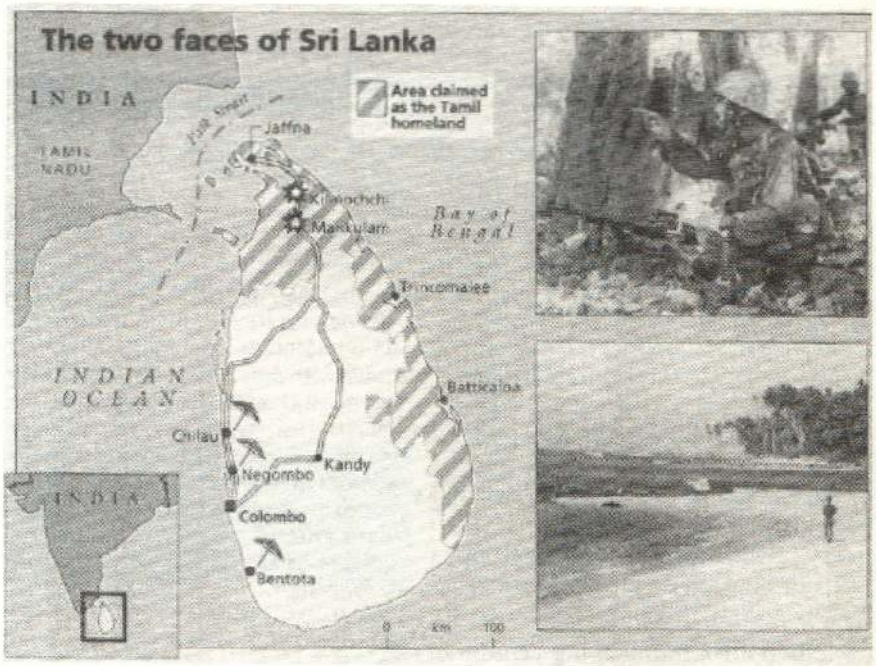
A dispassionate military observer might well judge that both sides were losing. The army had 630 men killed defending Kilinochchi, and 400 wounded; a fearful slaughter in one battle for a population of only 18m, Most of the infantry are from the rural areas, where jobs are scarce. The realities of the war are too much for many village lads, and the army acknowledges 5,000 desertions in the past six months. The Tigers too suffered big losses in the battles over these two towns. The government claims the Tiger are now recruiting children, but has no convincing evidence, **Military intelligence appears to be weak and there are no reliable estimates of the strength of the Tigers' forces.**

On the beaches

It is possible to visit Sri Lanka without becoming aware of its civil war. Many people do, especially now in the main tourist season. "Soak up the sun on a golden sandy beach," says a tourist advertisement. The sun is neutral, It shines down with equal intensity on the tourist at a south-western resort and on the soldier dying at the other end of the island.

Sri Lanka manages to live two lives, It has the life of what might be called a normal developing country, It has its tourism, it produces some of the world's best tea, its women earn a dollar a day in factories making clothes for rich countries. Sri Lankan housemaids working abroad live frugally so as to send home most of their pay. The authorities do their best to keep the IMF, if not happy, then at least content. Mrs Kumaratybgam whatever her socialism, has been a keen privatiser. Sri Lanka has escaped the recent economic pain of some other Asian countries; the man who sleeps on a mat has nowhere to fall, says old Sri Lankan wisdom. The country remains a democracy, and its newspapers are outspoken to the point of rudeness. Unlike Pakistan, it has never succumbed to army rule; the last and only time in recent history that the island had martial law was in 1914, when it was ruled by the British.

But the barrier it seeks to put between its war and its peace is not impregnable, Every so often there is



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some catastrophe that engulfs the whole country, In 1996 a lorry full of explosives driven by a Tiger smashed into the heart of Colombo's financial district, killing 87 people and injuring more than 1,000, besides wrecking banks and other building , Last January another suicide bomber destroyed part of a temple in Kandy that contains a tooth of Buddha , the holiest relic of the Sinhalese.

By the time Mrs. Kumaratunga came to power, much though had been given over the years to solving what officials call "the ethnic problem". In the early days, improved security was thought to be the answer. **Sri Lanka sought advice from a number of countries, including Israel(which upset some in the Muslim minority who support the Palestinians).** India, the local superpower, offered a friendly hand, and in 1987 appeared to have brokered a deal with Tamil groups, whereby they would band over their weapons in return for more autonomy in Tamil areas. The Tigers pulled out of the deal, and an Indian "peacekeeping" force went after Sri Lanka's government decided no longer wanted a foreign army in the country. Rajiv Gandhi, India's prime minister at the time, was later murdered, it is assumed by the Tigers.

Can't kill the idea

It was specifically the Tigers' leader Mr.Prabhakaran, some people in the government decided, who was the problem; he should be killed. What happened then is disputed, Reportedly, Ranasinghe Premadasa, who had become president in 1989, arranged for the army to supply arms to the Tigers. For what? For dissident rebels to use aginst the president's enemies, say some others. Whatever the truth, it was not Mr.Prabhakaran who suffered; Mr.Premadasa was killed by the Tigers in 1993.

Mr.Prabhakaran is only 44 and seemongly as vigorous as when he bombed the carnival at the age of 18, killing him now would not be likely to end the fighting; you can't kill the Tamils'idea of a homeland. Mrs.Kumaratunga has proposed changes on Sri Lanka's constitution aimed at handing powers to regional councils, one of which would be administered by Tamils. This is far short of what the Tigers demand, Yet it is more than many Sinhalese would concede. The very extent of what the Tigers claim-a good third of the island-angers the Sinhalese . The latter were encouraged this week by a report by a United Nations agency that chided the

Tigers for not modifying their demands. They point out that the majority of Tamils live outside the notional "homeland" and live in peace with the Sinhalese and other minorities, Solomon himself would have paused before taking on such a negotiation.

Long job for govt.

After its recent setbacks the government's policy is attrition. The Tigers are terrorists, it argues, and have to be killed or captured. About a third of the national budget is devoted to giving the military all the means it neds to do the job. A long job it is likely to be- and perhaps it will never be completed.

The Tigers are rich. The Tamil diaspora of perhaps half a million people is spread throughout the world, contributing money to Tamil charities, much of which pays for the Tigers' war effort, London is an important Tamil centre. The British government is trying to clamp down on organisations that take advantage of Britain's traditional policy of providing sanctuary for dissident groups. As a result, the Tigers' friends are now thinking of moving elsewhere . Canada is a possibility , Like Britain, it is the home for many organisations representing ethnic conflicts abroad , South Africa is also favoured. Many Tamils live there, The Tigers have long had links with the African National Congress, once the opposition and now the government , Sri Lanka has pleaded with South Africa not to allow the Tigers to set up shop there, but its response has been ambiguous.

As a fighting force the Tigers are an elite, if that is not an abuse of the word, They are well armed, have a small navy that regularly attacks and sinks government ships, and may have aircraft. They are thought to have bases in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, even though India has formally outlawed them since the murder of Rajiv Gandhi Mr. Prabhakaran is a clever general. The attack on Kilinochchi involved building up a large Tiger force close to the town, apparently without the army being aware of it. Who will get tired of the endless battles first, the Tigers or the army? It is an open question.

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Note by Editor
HOT SPRING

It is not in the nature of THE ECONOMIST to devote two full pages to Sri Lanka, complete with a picture of LTTE leader Prabhakaran himself (Dec.5), and it was this unusually generous coverage of the Sri Lankan mess that gave us one reason to reproduce the article in full. The second reason was that it was not altogether slanted against the Tamil Tigers as it happens to most reports that emanate from the Colombo end.

But yet there have been some flaws and misrepresentations by the writer that needs to be pointed out. Para 1: Cremation is usual among Hindus, which is right. Apart from the fact that all Tamil guerillas are not Hindus, there is also an old tradition among Hindus to honour their heroes by entombing them. The emphasis is on heroes. The Tigers consider every one of their fighters killed in the battle for freedom as heroes and martyrs, and that is why every year without fail they recall their memory in the month of November, beginning with November 25 when the first Tiger "Shanker" was killed in action. Except to the cynics, that week in November is a solemn, reverential ritual with lakhs of Tamils both within the island and outside who hold lighted lamps and candles and stand in prayer for the departed. To call the burial of martyrs as "propaganda" and then bulldoze the gravestones reflects a kind of barbaric action which your correspondent himself unfortunately failed to observe. It might not be generally known that one of the greatest Hindus that the island of Ceylon produced was Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan who was NOT cremated but entombed in Jaffna. Another instance was the late Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M.G.Ramachandran who was also entombed and a mausoleum built on the spot at the Marina beach in Chennai.

Para 3 : To state that the conflict started in August 1972 when "Mr.Prabhakaran threw some bombs at a carnival in Jaffna " is not only sloppy history, but also putting the cart before the horse. The roots of the conflict go back to 1956, when Mr.Prabhakaran was a 2-year old toddler. One must not mix up the consequence with the cause. Mr.Prabhakaran was the consequence of the confliat.

Your correspondent is apparently not aware of the fact that the call for a separate state came from the democratically elected mainstream party of the Tamils - the Tamil United Liberation Front which went before the people and secured a mandate for a separate state at the 1977 general elections of 1977.

Boston paper hints at U.S. mediation

The BOSTON GLOBE in its editorial of 7 December says:-

The Boston Globe

For the first time in four years, there is a glimmer of hope for peace talks to end one of the world's bloodiest conflicts, the war between the government of Sri Lanka and that country's Tamil minority. Terrible suffering on both sides has induced a war-weariness that may become the prelude to peacemaking.

A call for negotiations last Friday from the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam drew a wary but welcoming response from Sri Lanka's main opposition party. "This is a major move by the Tigers, and it is a very positive one to which the government must respond," said the leader of the United National Party. This response is promising because for too long the opposition and the governing People's Alliance of President Chandrika Kumaratunga have competed to appear the more inflexible foe of dialogue with the Tamils.

Because Washington maintains warm relations with the Sri Lankan government, even providing training and arms sales to its armed forces, and since the Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran called for third-party mediation in his offer of negotiations, the United States could play a crucial role in ending Sri Lanka's long nightmare. .

" TAMIL TIGER GAINS PUT ARMY LEADER UNDER FIRE"

THE GUARDIAN, London, carries a report from SUSANNAH PRICE in Colombo in its issue of December 9, 1998, on "General" Ratwatte's "fight for his political life".

This is the report:

The Guardian

"The last few days have been miserable for Sri Lanka's Deputy Defence Minister and four-star general Anuruddha Ratwatte, who is directing day to day operations against the Tamil Tiger separatists.

"On Friday it was announced that a major military offensive which he has spearheaded since May 1996 was to end prematurely. Two days later, the rebels almost managed to kill him with a mortar shell.Gen.Ratwatte, known for his love of uniforms and other military trappings, remained upbeat in spite of his troubles.

His near misses

"We will come back", he told reporters shortly after fleeing the mortar attack on the town of Oddusuddan, 162 miles north of Colombo, which has just been taken by the army.

"The minister who leapfrogged various ranks to his current position is no stranger to near misses - two years ago his helicopter went down in a rebel-held area after running out of fuel. But this time he may have to fight for his political survival.

"His niece, President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who is also the defence minister, is reported to be taking the initiative in the 15-year old war and has made some major changes. One of the first was to end Operation Jaya Sikuru (Victory Assured) which Gen. Ratwatte launched in May 1996. Its objective was to take control of 47 miles of road leading through Tamil Tiger-held territory to the government-held Jaffna peninsula.

"The whole operation was a complete nightmare", said defence expert Iqbal Athas. "Not only did it involve capturing the whole road through the Tiger area but also holding on to it.They need a face-saving way to cancel it".

The offensive had appeared doomed since September when the Tigers captured the strategically important town of Kilinochchi, the last major settlement on the road before Jaffna. More than a thousand soldiers died in that attack. By the time the operation was cancelled, the army had taken about two-thirds of the road but more than three thousand soldiers had been killed in the process.

"The whole offensive was going nowhere for a long time", said the former chief of the Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal Harry Gunatileke. "The army has a serious manpower problem - they need to recruit 20,000 men and they just can't do it".

"The end of the campaign was announced in a press release which said simply that Operation Jayasikuru had ended and a new operation code-named Rivi Bala (Sun Power) had been launched. There was no further explanation and no suggestion of defeat.

"The Rivi Bala offensive has led to the capture of land in the east towards one of the Tigers' main bases, and Gen. Ratwatte, always highly visible in the local media, could hardly wait to visit the newly captured town of Oddusuddan with the three commanders of the armed services.

"As the general emerged from a Hindu temple where he had been talking to Tamil civilians, the Tigers launched their mortar attack. He was unhurt but four soldiers were killed and more than 40 injured.

"There were bodies and blood everywhere - it looked really bad the soldiers and the top brass were obviously shaken", said one reporter who visited the nearby town of Nedunkerni, where the casualties were taken.

"Analysts believe the army may now try to push further eastwards towards the coast following the Tigers' strategic withdrawl from Oddusuddan. But it is feared that the guerillas may have lured government forces into a false sense of security. "If they try to box in the Tigers by moving east it would be like trying to corner a wildcat in a small room", said Iqbal Athas. "It will pounce eventually and it could get very nasty".

Military option

"Civilian groups in Colombo are continuing initiatives to bring the political parties together to agree on a common framework for peace. But they cannot have been encouraged by the reaction of the foreign minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, to suggestions by the leader of the Tamil Tigers - or Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam - that there should be an initial dialogue. "If you ask me not to waste my time in trying to fight the LTTE as best as I can, I refute that completely", Mr.Kadirgamar told parliament. "I am going to spend time on trying my best to contain this group as much as possible before we talk".

"For now at least, it seems it is the military rather than the political solution that is occupying politicians".

Protest over London envoy's appoinment

A Sinhala rights group has protested to the President against the proposed appointment of Dr. Lal Jayawardane as Sri Lankan High Commissioner in London.

The National Joint Committee says its objection is mainly because Dr. Jayawardena, while serving as Director of the World Institute for Development Economic Research (WIDER) wrote a foreword for the controversial book "Buddhism Betrayed" by Prof. S.J. Tambiah.

This book the NJC claims vilifies the Maha Sangha by making it appear it was primarily responsible for violence in this country. Dr. Jayawardane in his foreword to the book which was banned by the government some years ago says "for Sri Lankans to seek to learn from this experience may not be entirely out of place and Prof. Tambiah"s book constitutes in my view the obvious starting point for anyone embarking on this task".

LETTER

Do Tamils Obtain Permission from Sinhalese to Express Their Views?

Mr.Latchu S.Rajah
from Colombo writes:-

Freedom of Speech and Right to express their views are some basic rights given to the general public by the Sri Lankan Constitution. Even though there are some Acts and Regulations which restrict this freedom, one cannot deny the inalienable rights of an ordinary man.

The 6th Amendment to the so called Sri Lankan Democratic Constitution imposed some regulations on particular group of professionals (for example, Parliamentarians, Attorney's at Law,Councilors etc..) to take oaths, which restricted their freedom of expression. Introduction of these regulations made the then TULF Parliamentarians resigning their posts as MP's in the eighties.

Recent speculations show that the expected legal action against the ACTC General Secretary Mr.Kumar Ponnambalam's interview on a private TV channel, may be based on these provisions and amendment. When commenting on these issues, an eminent legal personality said that even though there are limitations imposed by the amendments, these may have to be interpreted by the Courts in relation to the provisions of fundamental rights.

In an interview on Swarnavahini, a private television channel, Kumar Ponnambalam replied to various issues regarding the Tamil National Problem. At one stage, he mentioned that he fully supports the political stand of the Liberation Tigers. A viewer then asked, why Mr.Ponnambalam is living in Colombo and support the LTTE. He further criticised that because of the Sinhalese community permitted him to live in Colombo only, Kumar Ponnambalam is able to live here and speak like this. The compere at one point warned Kumar that his views and opinions may lead to a similar situation like in 1983.

To these issues, Kumar Ponnambalam replied that he is not living in Colombo because of the Sinhalese have given permission, but God has given him strength to live in Colombo. Further he elaborated that the LTTE has 100 percent support in the Jaffna peninsula and 80 percent support among the Tamils living in Colombo. Also he noted that he does not want to go and get permission from his enemy (The Ministry of Defence)to go to his own land.

He also replied to the compere that he is not worried about 83's and asked him not to threaten the Tamils by mentioning about 83's.

This was the first interview in Sinhalese language which was widely viewed and many Sinhalese fundamentalists were shocked to hear the statements in support of the LTTE on a Television station telecasting from Colombo. One journalist belonging to a Sinhalese newspaper sarcastically questioned whether the President is able to express her views on "Voice of Tigers".

Mr.Kumar Ponnambalam has expressed similar views in the past but those were in Tamil or English languages. In a meeting held at Kathiresan Hall, Bambalapitiya in June 1998, he said " While the government and opposition members are talking about negotiations with the LTTE at one side, they are asking the Tamils not to support the LTTE. I am totally supporting the Political Stand of the LTTE. I challenge the government to do whatever they could do."

The proceedings of this meeting were recorded by the CID but no actions were taken against him for making such statements. These statements were made in Tamil.

The government's initiatives to take legal actions came after cries from many Sinhalese chauvinist newspapers and leaders condemning the government for allowing Tamils to express their views in support of the LTTE. Whether the LTTE is a terrorist or separatist or a liberation organisation, that is a different question. But one cannot deny the right of a person to support anothers' policies and theories.

This shows that the government is unable to stand the chauvinist demands and calls and therefore it is threatening the Tamil public to keep silent and deny their right to express their views to the world.

If the Sinhalese public and government are not prepared to listen to different opinions of the Tamils, how can they achieve the so called "peace with justice"? If the Sinhalese community still thinks that because they have given permission only, the Tamils are living outside the North-East, then how can they claim that this "land belongs to all of us to live with harmony"? The President mentioning the Tamils as "not original to this country" is a typical view of the Sinhalese chauvinist mind. If the Tamils have to get permission from Sinhalese to live out side the North-East and to express their views, then why a united country? What this shows is that the Tamils will be safe and independent and will be free to express their opinions only in the Nort-Eastern Provinces which they claim as their Traditional Homeland.

Therefore it is for the Sinhalese people to decide whether the demand for self determination by Tamils is legitimate or illegitimate!

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Over 7,000 gathered in Toronto for Martyrs' Day

BY BRIAN MCANDREW
TORONTO STAR STAFF REPORTER

More than 7,000 members of Toronto's Tamil community gathered last night for a memorial service honouring the rebels who have died fighting for an independent nation in Sri Lanka, reports the Toronto Star of 29 November.

Photos of nearly 1,500 Tamils killed in fighting with the Sri Lankan army were put on display in the darkened arena of the CNE Coliseum, lit by soft red spotlights and thousands of shimmering votive candles.

Each was a relative of a Tamil family now living in Ontario.

The Coliseum was strewn with Tamil Tiger flags, including a gigantic red banner featuring a yellow tiger's face over two black rifles that hung behind an elevated stage where traditional Tamil music, dance and drama were performed.

The service brought an end to Heroes Week, marked by supporters of an independent Tamil Eelam in honour of the 14,000 Tamils among the 57,000 killed in the 15-year-old civil war.

Selvavinayagam Kanapathipillai placed a single pink rose beneath the photo of his daughter, Niththila Thushyanthi, killed in January, 1997, along the Kandy-Jaffna road, the scene of more than two years of horrible fighting between Tamil Tiger rebels and the Sri Lankan army.

He does not know how she died. Her body was never recovered.

She was once a teacher but joined the Tamil Tigers several years ago and achieved the rank of major, her father recalled.

The battle for the road has become a significant event for government troops fighting to capture the highway running through the northern stronghold of the Tamil Tigers, a 5,000-member rebel group considered terrorists by the Canadian government but looked on as freedom fighters by Tamils supporting independence.

``We could not go there. There was too much fighting,'' Kanapathipillai told The Star during the five-hour memorial service at the end of what Tamils world-wide mark each year as Heroes Week.

``I was always worried as a father. You can try and stop your children from doing something like this but they will go without your consent because our people are suffering,'' said the retired school principal, now living in Scarborough.

``We could not stay there any longer,'' said a still-grieving Kanapathipillai, who, with his wife, joined their three other children already living here.

The island of Sri Lanka is the size of southwestern Ontario but home to 18 million. The Tamils, belonging to the Hindu religion and making up 18 per cent of the population, want a separate country on the island. They claim they have been discriminated against by the majority Sinhalese.

Human Rights abuses in border villages

Sri Lankans living in villages bordering the strife-torn northeastern province have accused the island's government of violating their basic rights in its battle against Tamil rebels, an independent commission has said.

``These people have no basic rights, no basic facilities, no water, no sanitation, `` Leela Isaac, co-chair of the commission, told a news conference in Colombo. ``Schools and hospitals have been made into police stations,'' she added.

``These people want the war to end. They feel that the government is using it (the war) as an excuse to neglect the border villages,'' she said, shortly after releasing the report of the panel, set up by a group of non-governmental organisations.

The 20-member panel, formed in September and drawn mostly from educationists and activists, had access only to people living in border villages controlled by the military.

The report, based on the oral evidence of some 192 people and written submissions from almost 1,000 people in eight districts bordering the war-torn northeastern province, said militarisation had led to severe human rights violations.

``The soldiers in conflict zones sexually harass women. Armed men intimidate women,'' the report said, adding that young women were often made false promises of marriage by soldiers and were made use of for sex.

``In many places civilian life is totally subjugated by military conditions of the state and other armed parties,'' the report said.

``Language rights are ignored. People are forced to work for the military without pay, clearing the jungle and building bunkers.''

The panel's investigations stretched over a period of three months, but officials did not say how far back in time the alleged rights violations extend.

TOWARDS A GENUINE POLITICAL RESOLUTION

The following are the contents of a Campaign Document on the Tamil National Issue presented at a meeting, with Mr. Derek Fatchett, M.P., Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, in his offices on 19 October 1998, by a delegation of EXPATRIATE TAMILS, BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY CAMPAIGN.

PREMISE

A LASTING RESOLUTION TO THE TAMIL NATIONAL ISSUE IN THE ISLAND OF SRI LANKA CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH A GENUINE AND SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATION PROCESS, RECOGNISING THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE PEOPLE OF TAMIL EELAM, AND CONDUCTED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LIBERATION TIGERS OF THAMIL EELAM.

TO ARRIVE AT THAT STAGE THERE HAS GOT TO BE AN IMMEDIATE END TO THE GOVERNMENT'S MILITARY OPTION, AND THE DISMANTLING OF ALL BARRIERS TO A FREE RETURN OF ALL DISPLACED TAMIL CIVILIAN POPULATION TO THEIR OWN HOMES. ONLY THEN CAN A CLIMATE OF NORMALCY BE INITIATED FROM WHERE MUTUAL TRUST AND STABILITY CAN BE ACHIEVED ON THE GROUND.

'THE EMERGENCE AND ACCEPTANCE OF AN INDEPENDENTLY ADMINISTERED, AUTONOMOUS TAMIL STATE WITHIN THEIR NORTH EAST HOMELAND, ARISING FROM THEIR EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION BY THE TAMIL PEOPLE, WOULD NOT IN ANY MANNER LEAD TO THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE ISLAND REPUBLIC, BUT CAN ONLY UNITE BOTH NATIONS IN COMMON PURPOSE TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE ISLAND AS A WHOLE'.

INTRODUCTION

Today Chandrika Kumaratunga takes great satisfaction and pride in claiming her greatest achievement. In her most recent address in London she says thus:-

"The greatest achievement we achieved so far, is changing the general opinion amongst the international community. Most countries who had any doubts are willing to trust the Sri Lankan government. ... Most of these countries are willing to accept our proposals as the only way forward to settle the conflict and believe that all our actions are genuinely geared towards that end. ***This confidence shown by the international community has been a great catalyst in all our actions."***

Very revealing indeed

The above statement in itself confirms a wider reflection of the enormous quantity of monetary and military support she receives from the international community that complements the governments military expenditure. ***This contribution by the international community, including Britain, is a major factor in bolstering the on-going war of destruction on the Tamil people and their North East homeland.***

Modern military hardware worth millions of dollars and many thousands of army personnel are poured into the North for the possession of a stretch of road in the heart of the Tamil homeland, resulting in further disruption of civilian occupancy and life. In equal measure ***a displaced Tamil population of more than half million people are being denied any supply of basic necessities of food and medicine, and left to suffer illness and death in the jungles of the Vanni region.*** By an order, the government has banned the distribution of rations to the two districts of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu - being areas outside the control of the army and where displaced Tamil population is at the highest.

Is this all what the international community really requires from President Chandrika, to justify their continued commitment to support her government's ventures on the Tamil National Issue?

PERCEPTION

from:- 'THE SPECTER OF SECESSION' Responding to Claims for Ethnic Self -determination - Hurst Hannum, Professor of International Law, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University and author of Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination: The Accommodation of Conflicting Rights

PARALLELS DRAWN IN THE CONTEXT SRI LANKAN POLITICS ON POLITICAL PRINCIPLES AND SELF-DETERMINATION

*....'Ethnically based states almost inevitably lead to claims of ethnic superiority on the part of the new majority and to a cultural rigidity that creates problems for new minorities'....

On the granting of independence and power to the ethnic Sinhala people in the island of Sri Lanka, they emerged as the new majority within the context of the Unitary system of government, and the Tamil people whose ethnic national identity went unrecognised automatically became the new minority also within the context of Unitary governance over the whole island.

*....'State sovereignty over and within its borders is also reflected by a legitimate international interest in human rights, environment and other issues that consolidates the jurisdiction of the State'....

The Tamil people and their North East homeland regions have over the past 50 years of independence, been systematically denied these basic human rights and environmental protection. The absence to date of these factors in the Tamil context, confirms beyond doubt the non-existence of Sri Lankan jurisdiction over the Tamil homeland.

*....'Central governments should no longer be allowed to hide behind the facade of national unity without explaining how minority rights are being protected'....

The constitutional set-up and the powers of the government vested in the presidency in Sri Lanka has repeatedly compromised on this principle through gross violation of Tamils' rights over its entire governance.

*....'Those who claim to speak on behalf of their nation should be able to demonstrate their mandate through free and fair elections'....

Not one Sri Lankan government since 1956 has obtained any mandate from the Tamil People, nor have the pro-government Tamil politicians obtained any mandate from the Tamil People under fair and free elections since 1977.

*....'A National Liberation Movement that emerges from a widespread desire of the People for secession or for other major changes to the constitution of a State, arising out of continued repression prohibiting the free and democratic expression of minority views then they can claim to speak on behalf of their nation'....

The Liberation Tigers of Thamil Eelam is such a movement that reflects the free will of the Tamil People. After many years of governmental deception and after many a fictitious election to manipulate a pro-government Tamil representation, the Sri Lankan regime now holds the Tamil people to political ransom through continuous repression of their free expression and choice of their future.

*....'International law does not prohibit secession, whether voluntary or violent, though the right to secede has not been recognised either'....

In Sri Lanka, any talk of Secession itself would not present an obstacle to the conclusion of a negotiated settlement to the Tamil National Issue.

*....'Two historically consistent and morally justifiable purposes can be served by contemporary self-determination and are therefore deserving of international support. One, is protecting individual and group identity - this is toady, reflected largely by the human rights norms that has developed since 1945. Two, facilitating effective participation in government - this implies finding appropriate levels of self-government to guarantee effective participation by all in the economic and political life of the country'....

Tamil and Sinhala identities and their homelands together with their effective governance through their two autonomous entities would ensure entrenchment of the above two factors in the Tamil/Sri Lankan context.

*....'A third party being a member of the international community, must agree on criteria for intervention that goes beyond a political preference on one side or the other. The only legitimate goal consistent with the present international order is ensuring that separation or unity occurs without disturbing international peace'....

These two principles should present no obstacles when addressing the Tamil National Issue in the island of Sri Lanka

NECESSITIES

*We appreciate Britain's readiness to help in the resolution of the conflict, as has often been declared repeatedly by the present and previous governments. The contentious phrase has always been '**if both sides ask us to play a role**'.

In deference to that concept, **there is prevalent at all times an established relationship with the Sri Lankan government, as opposed to the absence of any recognition being extended towards the Tamil leadership that represents Tamil national aspirations.** Britain should adopt appropriate measures to project an inclusive dialogue with the Liberation Tigers of Thamil Eelam for strengthening and furthering the prospects for a peaceful settlement.

*Having the prerogative of common understanding between sovereign states and while promoting bi-lateral foreign Aid and Trade relationships, Britain should **exert intense and increased diplomatic pressure on the government of Sri Lanka** to end its inhuman and un-winnable war against the Tamil people.

Recent comments by the British High Commissioner in Colombo, on a visit to Jaffna, was both very inappropriate and unfortunate in its content and showed little regard to the self-respect and sensitivities of the Tamils within and outside their homeland. It was as if Britain was prepared to compromise its diplomatic prestige and ready to follow blindly what the Sri Lanka government wishes to reflect to the world.

*Britain, together with other concerned countries should immediately desist from issuing licences for the export of arms to Sri Lanka, and instead, **call for the imposition of a short and stiff embargo on further military and monetary aid** from the international community to prompt the government into ending its military option and to pursue the path to a negotiated political settlement.

*The immediate concern of the international community should be **the provision of food and medical aid** to the half million displaced Tamils in the Vanni region, **the monitoring of such aid reaching those for whom it was intended and the setting-up of proper sanitary and health care** facilities.

***Britain** and the international community in upholding human rights and democratic values around the world, **should express their concerns about the continued ban on the free movement of foreign and Sri Lankan journalists to report on the reality surrounding the immense suffering of displaced Tamils.**

Britain should now review its current foreign policy towards the island of Sri Lanka, in the light of its government's determination to pursue with its military agenda. It is imperative that Tamil aspirations be recognised and given its due importance in the success of any negotiated process towards solving the Tamil national Issue in the island republic.

❑ ❑ ❑

But for introduction of Buddhism, Sinhalese would have been Hindus!

A.J.N.SELVADURAI

We have seen how in Yugoslavia the Serbs who dominated the military, brutalised and subjugated the other nations, and forced the UN and NATO to intervene. Their recent target was Kosova which consists of 90% ethnic Albanians. At least the Serbs may have historical reasons for claiming Kosova. But in Sri Lanka, the Sinhala-Buddhists who are originally from Bengal, as claimed by their ancient chronicle, The Mahavamsa, are now claiming the whole of the island, just because they are in the majority.

The Tamils are an indigenous race who came from South India which is only 21 miles across the Palk Strait, just as much as the peopie of Britain are Europeans whose ancestors came across from Europe.

It would be interesting to find out how a few boatloads of Sinhalese who came from Bengal 2,500 years ago have become a majority race. As Mr. V. R. de Silva - a Sinhalese pointed out in a Sunday paper published in Colombo, a few months ago, that the Sinhalese are a post-colonial product created by Buddhism and has challenged anyone to disprove him. No one has disproved him so far, not even the Nayaka Theros!!

Had Buddhism not been introduced into the island in the 3rd century BC the Sinhalese of today would all be Hindus, like the other Tamils. Had King Asoka of Bengal realised the damage he was doing to the future generations of the island, I am sure he would never have sent his son and daughter to convert the peaceful island of Hindus into a bigoted nation of Buddhists whose chauvinism would have made the Buddha weep in despair.

Instead of enlightening the people in the "eightfold path" and setting a good example, the Nayaka Theros gallivant in the most expensive air-conditioned Mercedes Benzcars, without begging for alms. Begging for alms is a Buddhist tradition laid down by the Great Sakyamuni as the symbol of their renunciation. The word "Bhikku" comes from the Sanskrit for "beg". One seldom comes across a begging bhikku these days because now their food is taken to the temple and they don't have to walk anymore.

The Government is trying hard to restore civilian rule after "liberating" Jaffna. Now almost 3 years after the liberation, the Government is forced to admit that this is an impossible dream of General Ratwatte. The TULF's refusal to appoint a new mayor makes it impossible for any credible government administration. **Allowing the government to hunker down and get on with civilian administration would take the Tamil nation back to square one and that is what the pro-government Tamils fail to understand. That is why they lost their mayors. Do you think that the Tamil Freedom Fighters fighting with the cyanide pill round their necks would permit such stupidity?**

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Eelam Tamil Theatre comes of Age

A scene from the children's play about cats, mice and monkeys

The "avant garde" Tamil theatre movement which saw birth in Jaffna, but found expression in Colombo in the mid-70s, has now come of age, interestingly enough, in the Tamil expatriate world of the West ! Although there were a few other talented pioneer producers too on the Colombo stage - (Tarcissius who heads the IBC Tamil Radio in London was one of them) - the credit for sustaining the modern stage tradition, and carrying it from East to West and from country to country goes to K.Balendra and the Tamil Performing Arts Society.

While the formula films of Tamil Nadu (song, dance and glamour) find a ready,and~what's worse ,a slavish audience among Tamils, the problem a play producer faces is to find an audience. The problem is compounded by the lack of drama scripts for the modern stage . There was in the late sixties and seventies, a rush of theatre activity in Colombo, in all three languages dominated by men like Ernest McIntyre (a Tamil who gave direction to English-language theatre), Dhamma Jagoda, Henry Jayasena and others in Sinhala-language theatre. Balendra and others. on the Tamil stage. The Lionel Wendt Theatre, the Lumbini Hall and the Saraswathy Hall became the appointed homes for these plays. But theatre activists in Sinhala and Tamil media had that one major handicap - the lack of original scripts in both languages. That naturally led them to turn to the West, and in doing so, they did not only introduce some of the outstanding playwrights of the world to the local stage, but also the kind of props and elements and stage effects, unknown to native viewers used to traditional dramas and nadagams. There were even daring dialogues that shocked tradition-bound audiences, but that perhaps was to be expected from plays with western values.

On 12th December, Balendra brought to the stage five~of his plays at the Merton Hall, a stage pitiably inadequate for 'plays of that kind, but then that is one of many handicaps that he has to overcome. Except for one, the other four plays were Tamil adaptations from western playwrights - **Samuel Beckett**, German playwright **Bertolt Brecht, Vaslav Havell** and **Harold Pinter**. The fifth one was something close to our hearts and minds

THE EXODUS **- depicting the tragic experience of the Tamil people - 500,000 of them fleeing their homes and hearths in the Jaffna peninsula in those dark days of October 1995 in the face of aerial bombings and artillery shellings by an enemy whose sole mission was to capture the peninsula. They trekked in slow motion, braved the muddy waters of the Kilali lagoon, and walked into an uncertain future, The play brings out that experience through the eyes of a woman trying to safeguard the life of her infant son, and is based on a short story by a Eelam Tamil woman writer, "Kunthavai".**

In the hands of Balendra, THE EXODUS("Peiyarvu")became a moving experience, touching the heart strings of an audience who had no direct experience of that tragic chapter in the history of the Tamil people. He achieved it through a judicious mixture of Song, Narration, Sound Effects, Paintings , and Shadow Play

Bertolt Brecht's satirical play "The Exception and the Rule" adapted to the Tamil stage and played on this occasion by children - and how well they did it! - was a singular triumph for Balendra. But the first play - an adaptation of Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot"did not take off as one would have wished. Perhaps it needed tighter editing.

The introduction of children's plays is a welcome feature, which brings fresh air into a programme of adult drama, as was exemplified in the one that was staged at the Bhavan Centre earlier on 21 November - a story of cats, mice and monkeys and the dispute two cats had in sharing equally one hopper The monkey who was called to adjudge on the dispute eventually gobbled the whole hopper himself. Was there a political message behind that apparently innocuous story - the dangers in third party mediation ? Maybe the moral was that you don't invite a monkey to mediate !

The Tamil Performing Arts Society is rich in talent:an imaginative /director producer in Balendra and a versatile and gifted actress in Anandarani, backed by a team of players like Krishnarajah, and Darshini Kanesapillai. But with all these assets, they give the impression of being a theatre group in search of an audience! It would be a great pity for the future of Eelam Tamil theatre if someone were to echo the words of Oscar Wilde after the first performance of Lady Windermere's Fan in 1987: "The play was a great success, but the audience was a total failure" !.

S.Sivanayagam

Tamil scholar honoured in London

Vidwan Velan, Tamil scholar and teacher, who completed his 75th birthday on 6th November was recently honoured by his old students in London, at a public function ("Pavala Vizha") at Thamil House, Romford Road, London.

Vidwan Velan who qualified as a Tamil Vidwan at Annamalai in India had been a teacher at Manipay Hindu College and at Hartley College, Point Pedro. He was also a lecturer and Principal of Kopay Training College for a time. After his retirement in 1984 he functioned as a Research Officer in the Ministry of Hindu Culture , engaged in compiling an encyclopacdia of Hinduism.

Among his works in Tamil are A Commentary on Kamba Rama yanam, "Saiva Samayam", "Ilakkiyathil Sila Iladchiyangal" and "Thirumanthiram", and in English, "The Message of Yoga Swamy of Jaffoa".

Vidwan Velan was also a political orator who appeared in many Federal party platforms

Picture shows Mr and Mrs. Velan, their daughter Mathini,(a gifted vocal musician);son-in-law S.Sriskanda rajah, attorney-atlaw and a Tamil writer himself. Instead of the western style cake, it was a cake of "kesari", a traditional Tamil sweetmeat that was served for the occasion!

Remembering the war orphans back home

"CHENCHOLAI" is the name of the Children's Home in Tamil Eelam, where the children orphaned by the war, are adopted and looked after by the LTTE, all their educational and personal needs met from public funds.

On the 13th December, Tamil children of all ages,ranging from 5 to 15 got together at the Woolwich Town Hall, London, and spoke and sang and danced their way to collect funds for their less fortunate children, now living in the Vanni.

An Arangetram to help the Tamil cause!

Among expatriate communities in the West where fond parents lavish a lot of personal wealth on having Bharatha Natya Arangetrams of their daughters, what happened at the Secombe Theatre at Sutton. Surrey, on Sunday 22 November, was something different, something original, something that made history.

With their teacher Subathra Shanteepan

Two sisters, Ahila and Mithila , students of Thirumathy Subathra Shanteepan, and daughters of Mr & Mrs. Ramakrishnan had their Bharatha Natya Arangetram that evening, and instead of making their parents pay for the occasion raised £5041.81 as donation to help the suffering Tamils back home. The money was given to the T.R.O. (Registered Charity No.1010029), 79, Hoe Street, Walthamstow, London E.17.

How did that miracle happen ? We will allow the father of the girls to explain. They were going one day in late July, on a long drive to a friend's house for dinner - father, mother, the two daughters and the son. It had been a long-standing desire on the part of the girls to have their arangetram, but the father, fond as he was of his daughters, would hear nothing of the idea . "What a waste of money, thousands of pounds to be thrown away on one evening, just to satisfy ourselves, when there are thousands and thousands of our brothers and sisters back home, living in jungles, living under trees with not even one square meal a day ?", he would chide them. The subject came up again during that long drive by car, and the same chiding on the part of the father, and the same tears in the eyes of the daughters.

Arriving at the doorstep of their friend there was a chilling silence on the part of the visiting party. What has gone wrong. asked the friend, and soon the matter was explained. During dinner, a plan was hatched on the friend's initiative. Your daughters WILL have their arangetram, you DONT have to throw away good money, and WE WILL ALSO HELP OUR SUFFERING BRETHREN BACK HOME.

The idea was really simple born out of an inspiration. It was decided to make the arangetram a sponsored event.

Once the decision was made, everything clicked into place. Friends rallied round to help. Various companies came forward to sponsor some need or other, auditorium charge, video, brochure floral charge etc. etc.

The Bharata Natya event itself was a huge success, with no pompous show, no display of wealth. Chief Guest was Dr.John Marr, Hony. Secretary of the Bharatlya Vidya Bhavan and Tamil cultural scholar of repute. Blessings also came from the

Ahila and Mithila

Dhananjayans of Adyar, Subathra Shanteepan's gurus, Smt.Pushkala Gopal of 'Mudralaya", Smt.Rathika Rajan of "London Narthana Alaya", and Thirumathy Sivasakthy Sivanesan, resident Vocal and Veena teacher at the Bhavan.

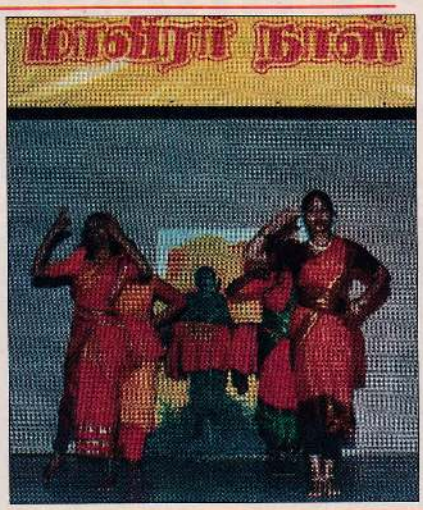
Guru Subathra Shanteepan was in charge of the "Nattuvangam", with Sivasakthi Sivanesan giving vocal support. Accompanists were M.Balachandar (Mridangam), L.Kothandapani (Violin) and P.Gnanavarathan (Flute)

Veena arangetram of Sharmini Rajagopal

The veena arangetram of Bharata Natya dansense Sharmini Rajagopal took place on 20th November at the Battersea Grand Hall, London, in the presense of a packed gathering.

Ottawa Tamils honour the Martyrs

The Ottawa Tamil Co-ordinating Committe in Canada, held Martyrs' Day with a programme of Worship, and cultural items on 22 November, with the young and the old participating with great enthusiasm.



Eelam Martyrs' Day in Italy

Tamil Eelam Martyrs' Day was observed in Palermo, Italy, on 29 November, with great gusto and reverence amidst a big and appreciative gathering.

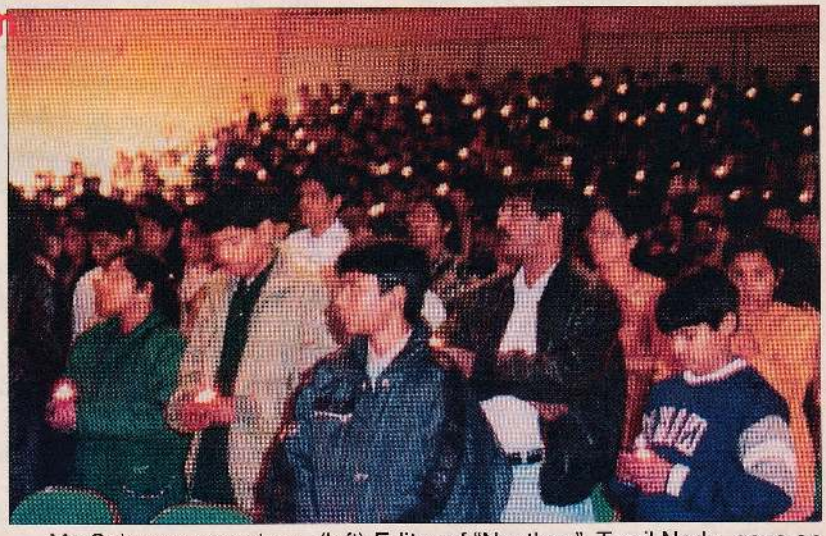
Film alips, Dance Dramas, Danae "abhinaya" to liberation songs and several other items were among those presented on the stage.

Miss.Ivansa, a young Italian woman spoke in Italian on the significance of Great Martyrs' Day, while paying tribute to the bravery of young Tamil men and women.

The highlight of the occasion was the presentation of a sculptural mould of a Tiger fighter by a talented Italian sculptor, **Dr.Vittale Rafello Mirella,** who was then honoured by several members of the audience (see picture).

Martyrs' Day observances were held also in other Italian towns

Eelam Martyrs' Day in London



Mr. Subaveerapandyan, (left) Editor of "Nanthan", Tamil Nadu, gave an emotional speech.

Those "special guests" at Vaiko's son's wedding!

"It was a VVIP wedding in which leaders of major political parties registered their presence", reported the Sunday Express India, of December 5. "Apart from Union Minister L.K.Advani and Defence Minister George Fernandes, Vaiko had some special guests at his son's wedding in Chennai on Sunday. Outlawed LTTE chief V.Prabhakaran's parents and several hardcore Eelam supporters were there in full strength at the wedding hall.

The Express report continues:

""According to police sources, Vaiko had neither informed the State government nor the Union Home Ministry in advance about inviting Eelam supporters (some of them LTTE sympathisers) to the function, though a galaxy of VVIPs facing high security risks including Advani, who is in the "Z" category, participated.

"Sources say that minutes before Advani arrived at the wedding hall, LTTE chief Prabhakaran's father, Velupillai (who lives in Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu) was moved from the dais to an ante-room with a guard posted, apparently to avoid any embarassment to the Union Home Minister. But ten minutes later they were back in the midst of the VVIP crowd.

Pro-Eelam speeches

"Interestingly, the hardcore Eelam campaigners including Kasi Anandan who is listed among the 21 suspects in the Jain Commission's final report on the Rajiv Gandhi assassination not only attended the wedding but made pro-Eelam speeches and even some pro-LTTE references. (The Jain Commission had said that the role of Kasi Anandan, apart from 20 other suspects in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination should be investigated. And the multidisciplinary monitoring agency set up by the Centre is to probe the role of Kasi Anandan and other suspects in the assassination.

Mr.Velupillai, father of the LTTE leader, (left) who was present at Vaiko's son's wedding, along with Kasi Anandan and Tamil Eelam activist M.K.Eeelaventhan. (right)

"While blessing the newly-wed, Kasi Anandan is said to have stated that the couple should beget Tiger-like kids (LTTE members are called Tigers).

"Not to be left behind,Eelaventhan, another Eelam campaigner hailed Vaiko as the "firm pillar"of the Tamil Eelam movement. "There is nothing for us to feel shy about. Vaiko is a big source of strength for the Eelam movement", Eelaventhan told the "Indian Express". He also claimed that he had a brief chat with Advani, Fernandes and Commerce Minister Ramakrishna Hegde at the wedding.

Vaiko

"But what raised several eyebrows at the function was MDMK MP Ganeshamoorthy's benedictory speech. Stating that Vaiko had a grandson by the name Prabhakaran, Ganeshamoorthy is said to have told the gathering that Prabhakaran and Vaiko were the only saviours of the Tamils.

"However, inquiries reveal that neither the Home Minister nor the state government are keen on kicking up a fuss over the presence of Eelam sympathisers.

VAIKO'S RESPONSE: However, MDMK leader Vaiko, when contacted, said that there was nothing wrong in inviting Eelam sympathisers to the wedding. "I am also a staunch supporter of Eelam and they are my personal friends", he said. As for the presemce of Prabhakaran's father at the wedding, he said Mr.Velupillai had nothing to do with the LTTE movement. Also Vaiko saw nothing wrong in not sounding the Home Minister about the Eelam sympathiser's participation.

Faux Pas in South Africa

This is a shot from the infamous TV interview given by Sri Lankan President Kumaratunga, in South Africa, where she described the Tamils as being not the original inhabitants of the island, under the mistaken impression that no one in South Africa would have known Ceylon history.

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